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THE UNCANNY X-MEN

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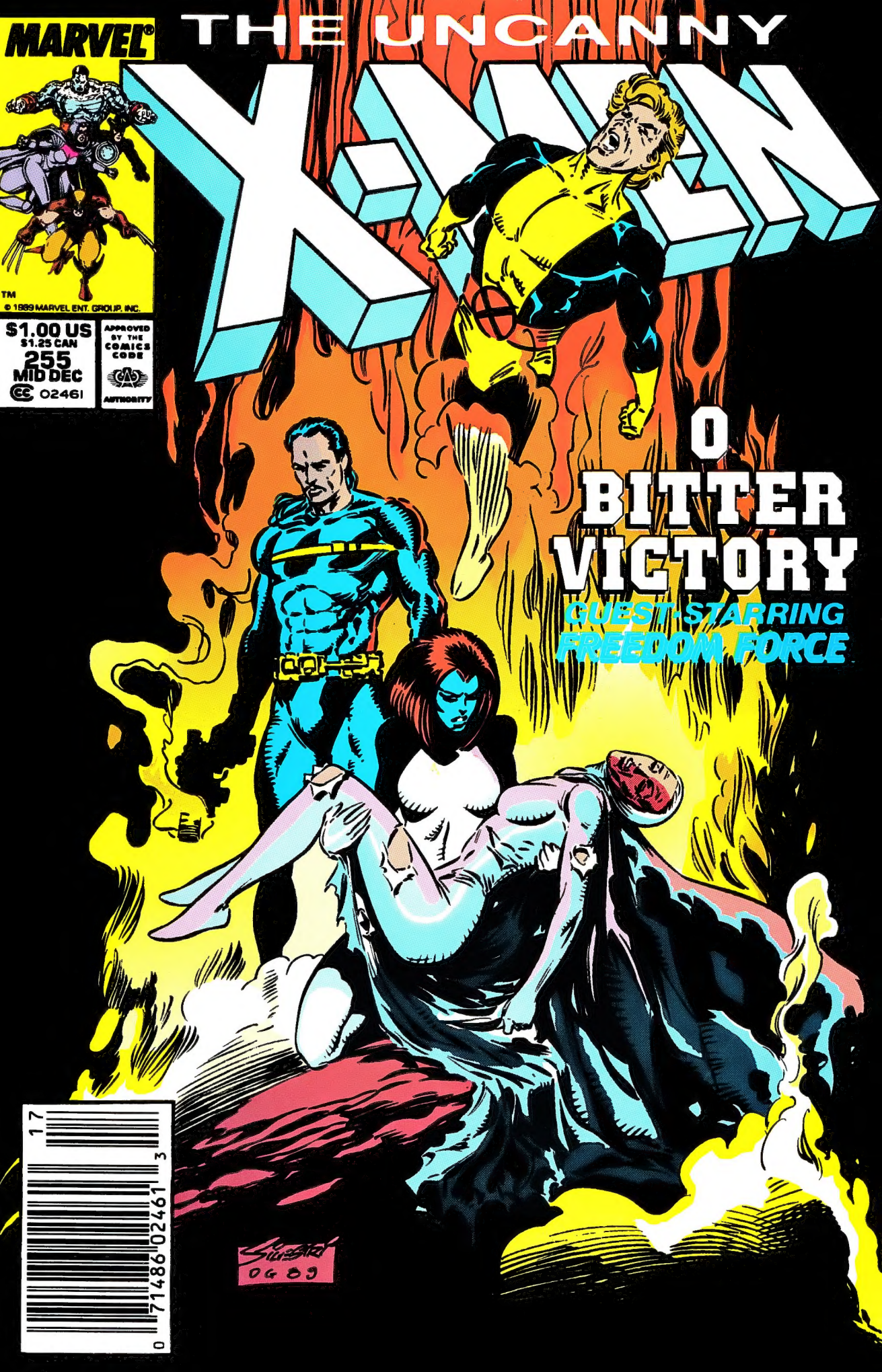
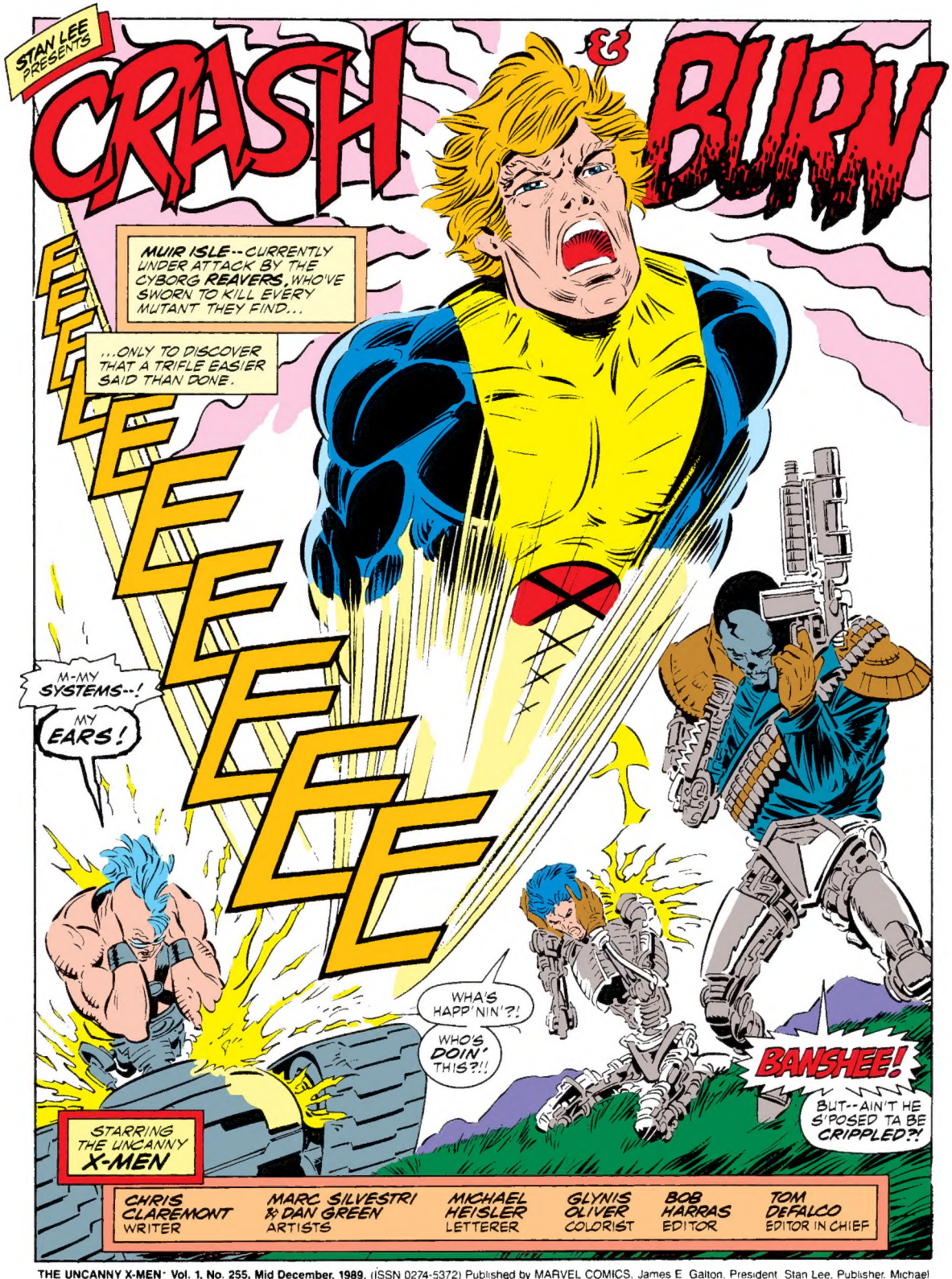
O BITTER VICTORY

GUEST-STARRING FREEDOM FORCE





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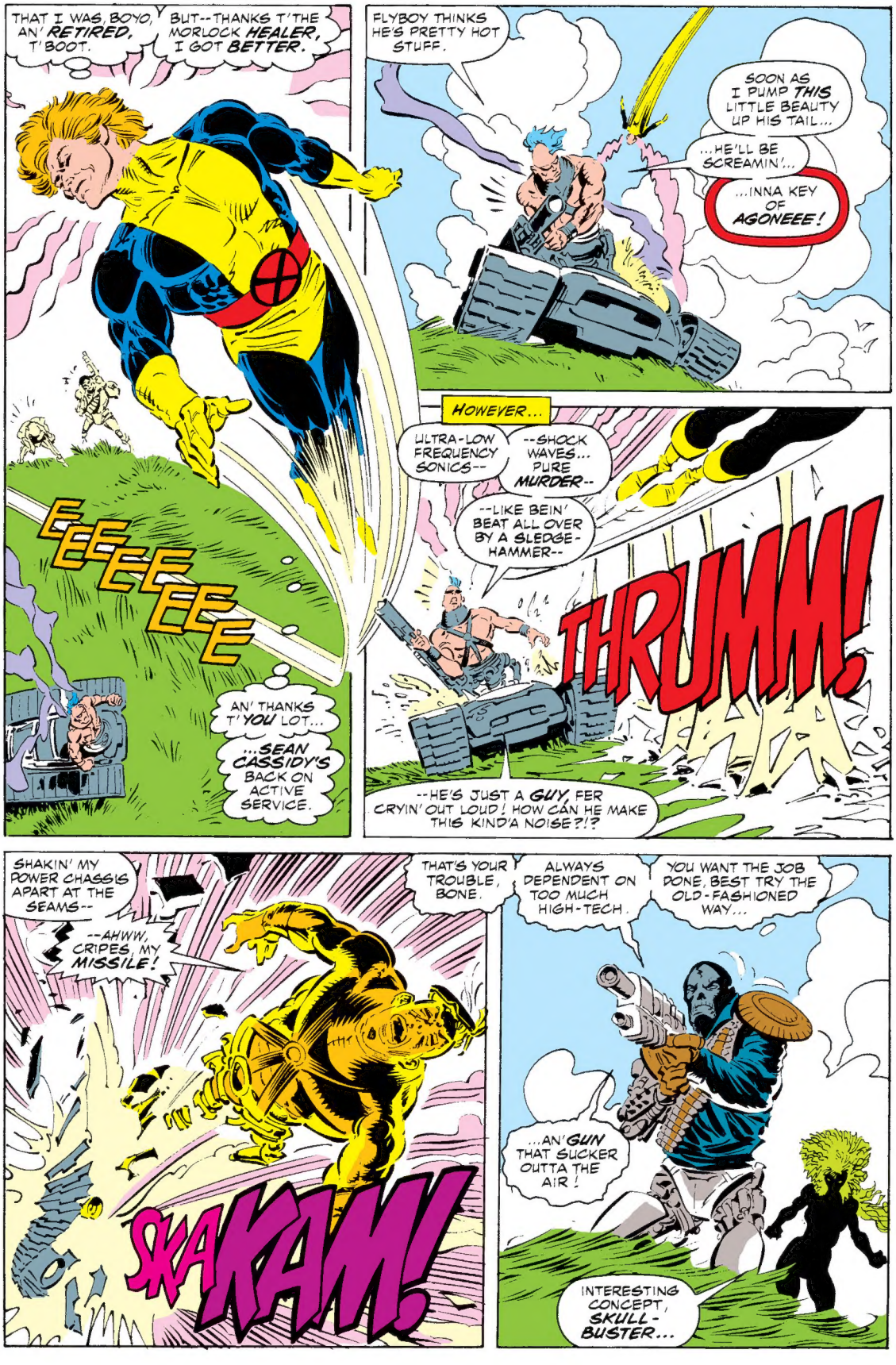
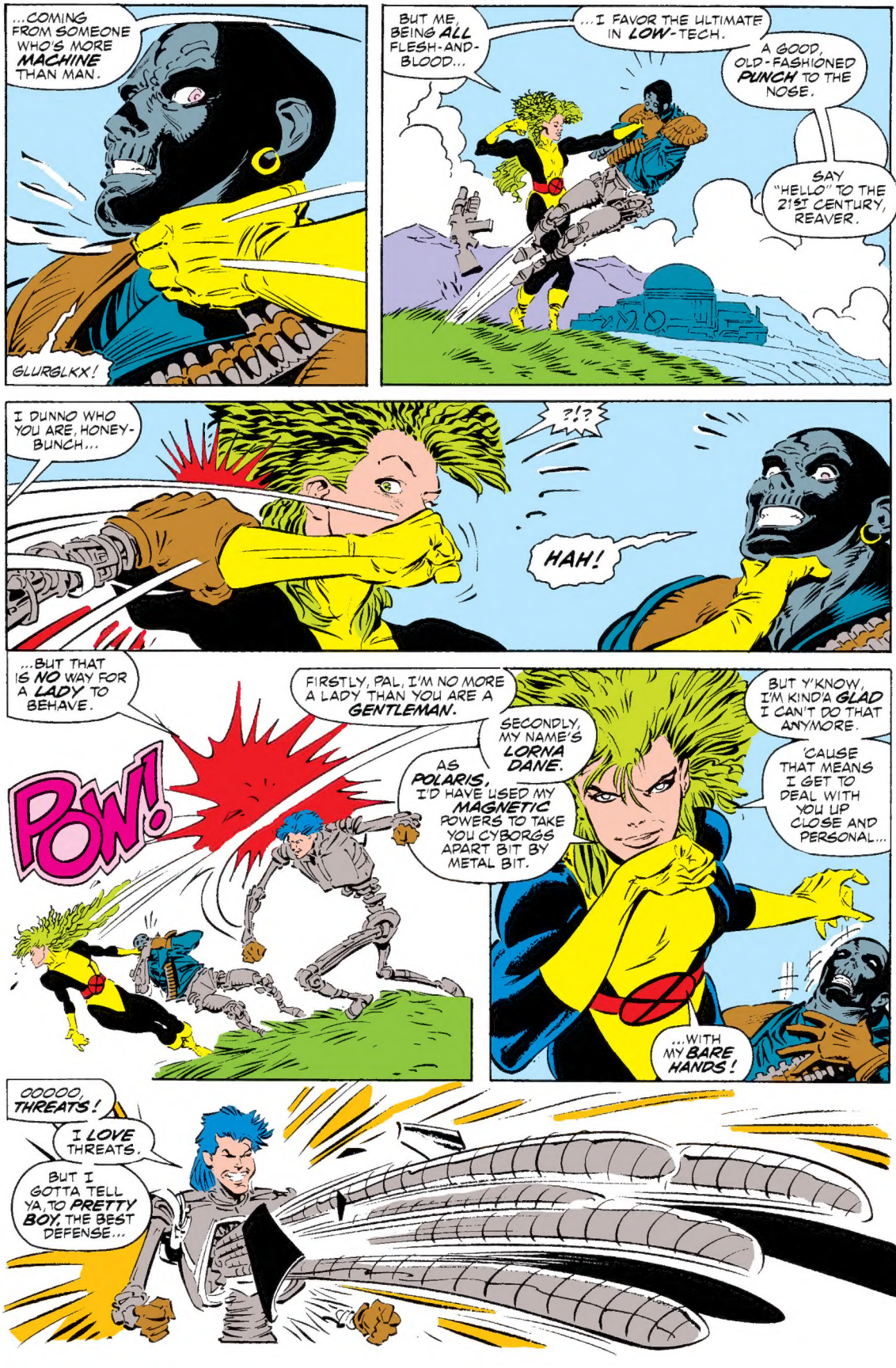
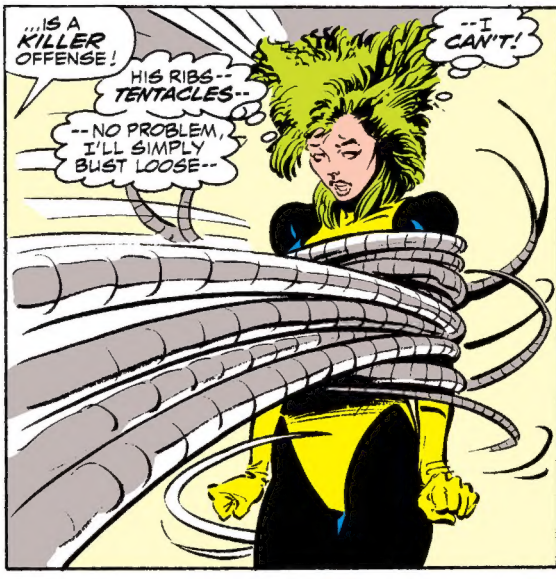
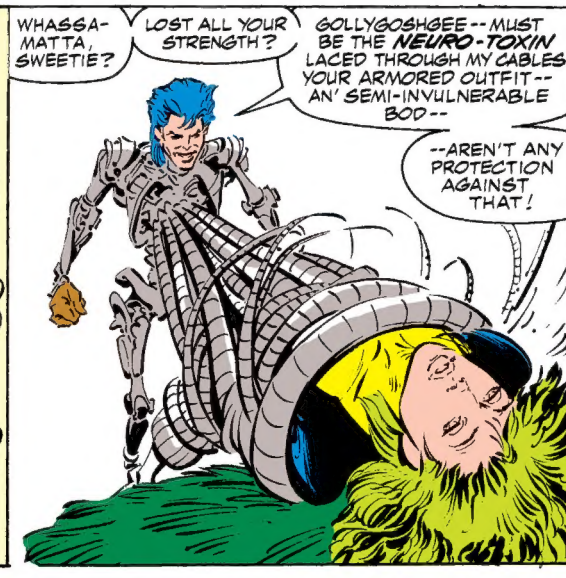
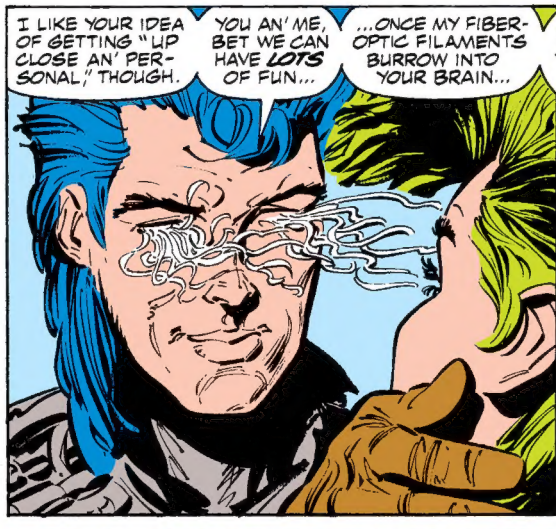
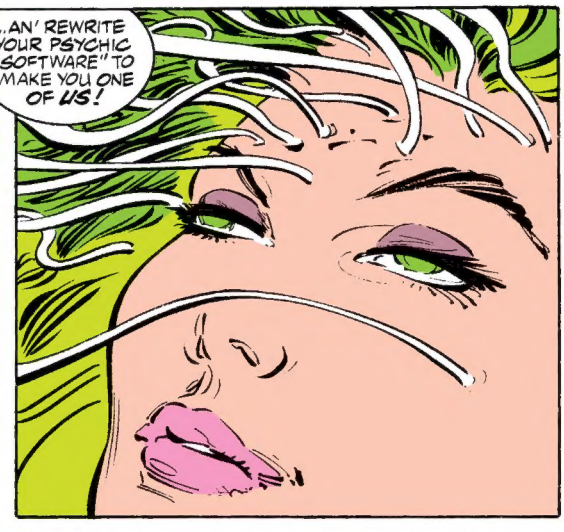

THAT I WAS, BOYO, AN' RETIRED, T' BOOT.
BUT--THANKS T' THE MORLOCK HEALER, I GOT BETTER.
EEEEEEEEE
AN' THANKS T' YOU LOT...
...SEAN CASSIDY'S BACK ON ACTIVE SERVICE.
FLYBOY THINKS HE'S PRETTY HOT STUFF.
SOON AS I PUMP THIS LITTLE BEAUTY UP HIS TAIL...
...HE'LL BE SCREAMIN'...
...INNA KEY OF AGONEEE!
HOWEVER...
ULTRA-LOW FREQUENCY SONICS--
--SHOCK WAVES... PURE MURDER--
--LIKE BEIN' BEAT ALL OVER BY A SLEDGE-HAMMER--
THRUMM!
--HE'S JUST A GUY, FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD! HOW CAN HE MAKE THIS KIND'A NOISE?!?
SHAKIN' MY POWER CHASSIS APART AT THE SEAMS--
--AHWW, CRIPES, MY MISSILE!
SKAKAM!
THAT'S YOUR TROUBLE, BONE.
ALWAYS DEPENDENT ON TOO MUCH HIGH-TECH.
YOU WANT THE JOB DONE, BEST TRY THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY...
...AN' GUN THAT SUCKER OUTTA THE AIR!
INTERESTING CONCEPT, SKULL-BUSTER...

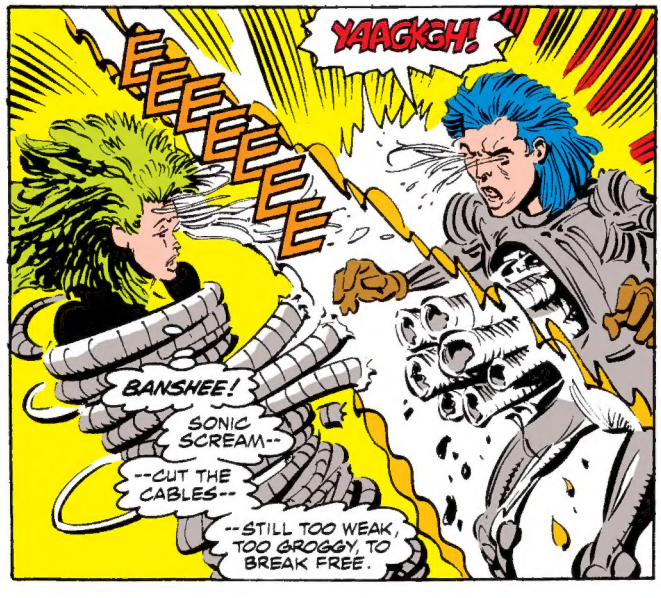

...COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO'S MORE MACHINE THAN MAN.
GLURGLKX!
BUT ME, BEING ALL FLESH-AND-BLOOD...
...I FAVOR THE ULTIMATE IN LOW-TECH.
A GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED PUNCH TO THE NOSE.
SAY "HELLO" TO THE 21ST CENTURY, REAVER.
I DUNNO WHO YOU ARE, HONEY-BUNCH...
?!?
HAH!
...BUT THAT IS NO WAY FOR A LADY TO BEHAVE.
FIRSTLY, PAL, I'M NO MORE A LADY THAN YOU ARE A GENTLEMAN.
SECONDLY, MY NAME'S LORNA DANE.
AS POLARIS, I'D HAVE USED MY MAGNETIC POWERS TO TAKE YOU CYBORGS APART BIT BY METAL BIT.
BUT Y'KNOW, I'M KIND'A GLAD I CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE.
'CAUSE THAT MEANS I GET TO DEAL WITH YOU UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL...
...WITH MY BARE HANDS!
POW!
OOOOO, THREATS!
I LOVE THREATS.
BUT I GOTTA TELL YA, TO PRETTY BOY, THE BEST DEFENSE...

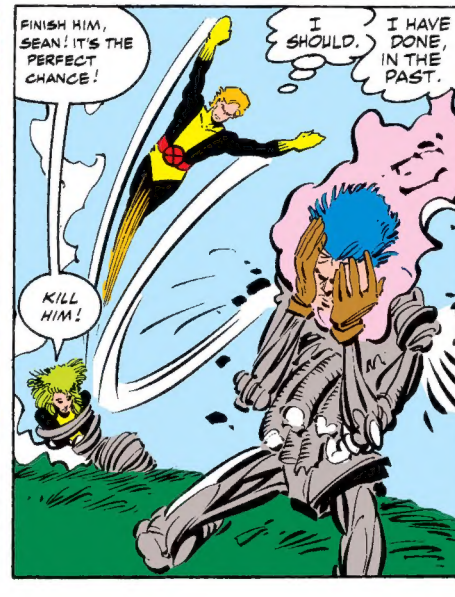

...IS A KILLER OFFENSE!
HIS RIBS-- TENTACLES--
--NO PROBLEM, I'LL SIMPLY BUST LOOSE--
--I CAN'T!

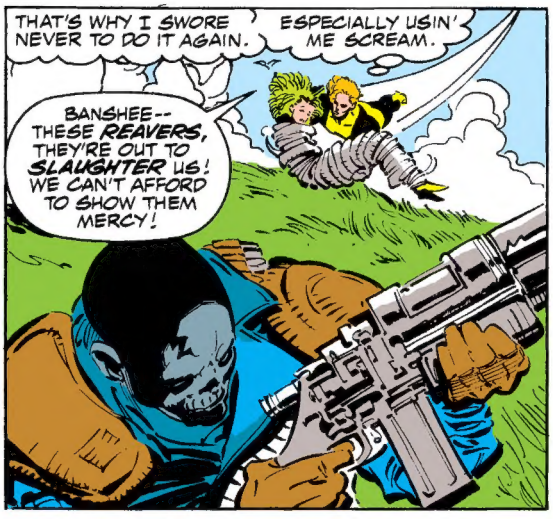

WHASSA-MATTA, SWEETIE?
LOST ALL YOUR STRENGTH?
GOLLYGOSHGEE--MUST BE THE NEURO-TOXIN LACED THROUGH MY CABLES, YOUR ARMORED OUTFIT-- AN' SEMI-INVULNERABLE BOD--
--AREN'T ANY PROTECTION AGAINST THAT!

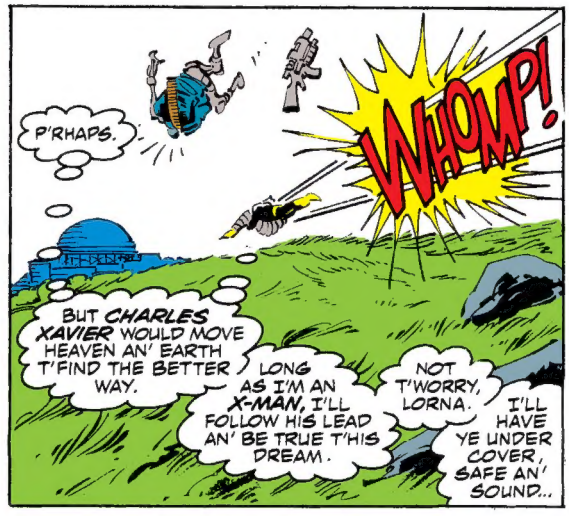

I LIKE YOUR IDEA OF GETTING "UP CLOSE AN' PERSONAL," THOUGH.
YOU AN' ME, BET WE CAN HAVE LOTS OF FUN...
...ONCE MY FIBER-OPTIC FILAMENTS BURROW INTO YOUR BRAIN...

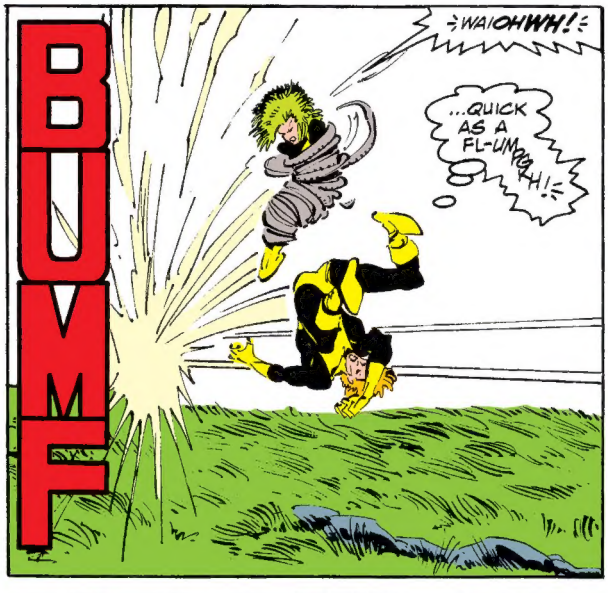

...AN' REWRITE YOUR PSYCHIC "SOFTWARE" TO MAKE YOU ONE OF US!

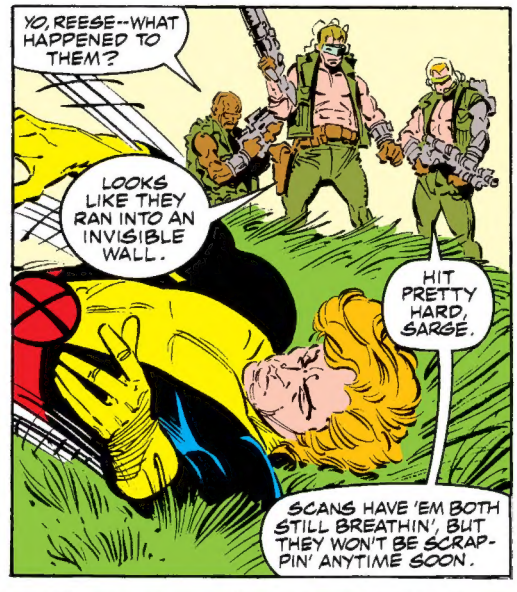

EEEEEEEEE
YAAGKGH!
BANSHEE!
SONIC SCREAM--
--CUT THE CABLES--
--STILL TOO WEAK, TOO GROGGY, TO BREAK FREE.

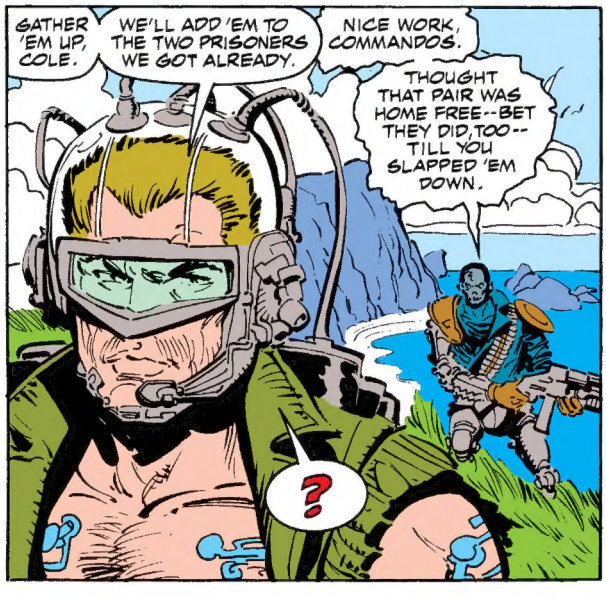

FINISH HIM, SEAN! IT'S THE PERFECT CHANCE!
I SHOULD.
I HAVE DONE, IN THE PAST.
KILL HIM!

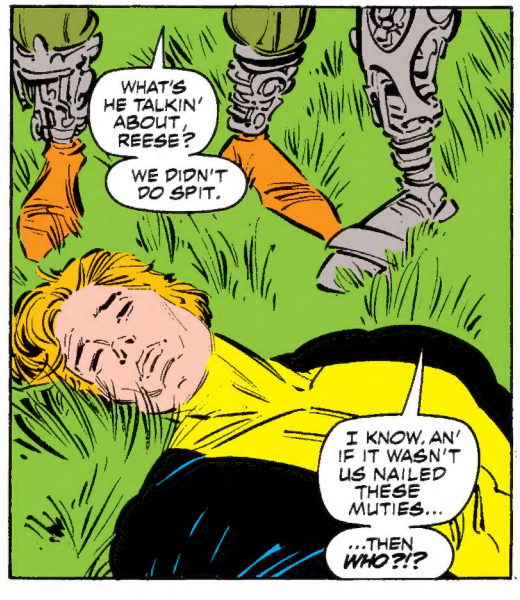

THAT'S WHY I SWORE NEVER TO DO IT AGAIN.
ESPECIALLY USIN' ME SCREAM.
BANSHEE-- THESE REAVERS, THEY'RE OUT TO SLAUGHTER US! WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SHOW THEM MERCY!

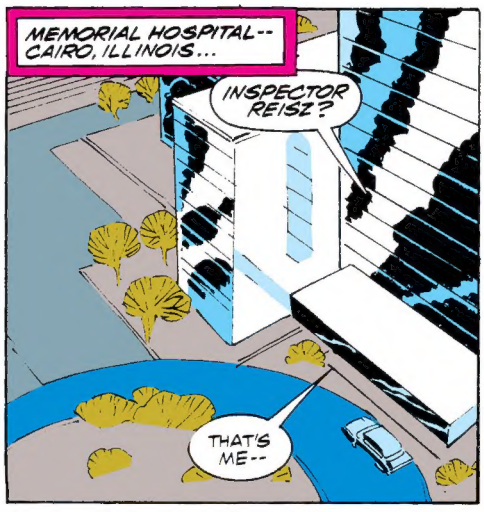

WHOMP!
P'RHAPS.
BUT CHARLES XAVIER WOULD MOVE HEAVEN AN' EARTH T'FIND THE BETTER WAY.
LONG AS I'M AN X-MAN, I'LL FOLLOW HIS LEAD AN' BE TRUE T'HIS DREAM.
NOT T'WORRY, LORNA.
I'LL HAVE YE UNDER COVER, SAFE AN' SOUND...

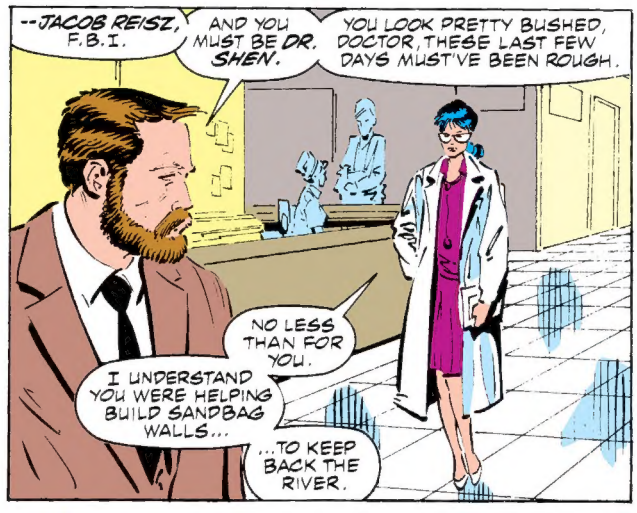

BUMF
WAIOHWH!
...QUICK AS A FL-UMPH!

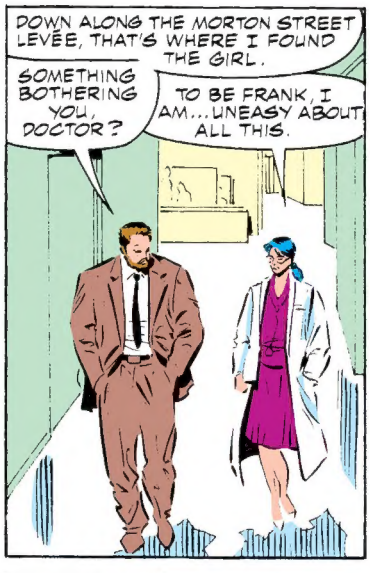

YO, REESE--WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
LOOKS LIKE THEY RAN INTO AN INVISIBLE WALL.
HIT PRETTY HARD, SARGE.
SCANS HAVE 'EM BOTH STILL BREATHIN', BUT THEY WON'T BE SCRAP-PIN' ANYTIME SOON.


GATHER 'EM UP, COLE.
WE'LL ADD 'EM TO THE TWO PRISONERS WE GOT ALREADY.
NICE WORK, COMMANDOS.
THOUGHT THAT PAIR WAS HOME FREE--BET THEY DID, TOO-- TILL YOU SLAPPED 'EM DOWN.
?


WHAT'S HE TALKIN' ABOUT, REESE?
WE DIDN'T DO SPIT.
I KNOW. AN' IF IT WASN'T US NAILED THESE MUTIES...
...THEN WHO?!?


MEMORIAL HOSPITAL--CAIRO, ILLINOIS...
INSPECTOR REISZ?
THAT'S ME--


--JACOB REISZ, F.B.I.
AND YOU MUST BE DR. SHEN.
YOU LOOK PRETTY BUSHED, DOCTOR, THESE LAST FEW DAYS MUST'VE BEEN ROUGH.
NO LESS THAN FOR YOU.
I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE HELPING BUILD SANDBAG WALLS...
...TO KEEP BACK THE RIVER.


DOWN ALONG THE MORTON STREET LEVÉE, THAT'S WHERE I FOUND THE GIRL.
SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, DOCTOR?
TO BE FRANK, I AM...UNEASY ABOUT ALL THIS.

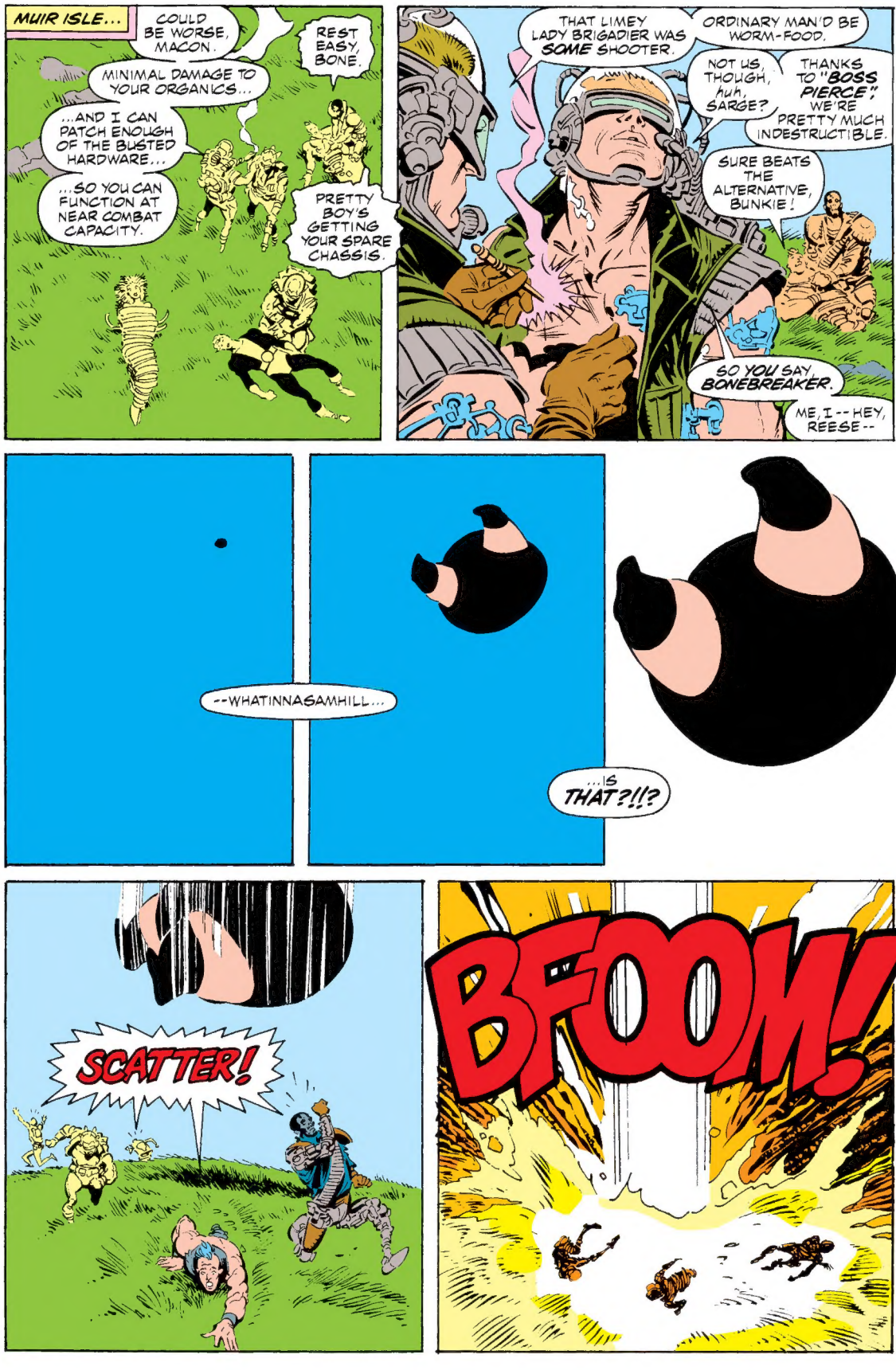
I DON'T MEAN THE CHILD ANY HARM, QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
THIS IS FOR HER OWN GOOD--AS WELL AS THE PROTECTION OF THOSE AROUND HER.
MY HEAD ACCEPTS YOUR ARGUMENTS, INSPECTOR.
MY HEART...
...WONDERS IF I'M NOT ACTING LIKE THOSE IN MY HOMELAND...

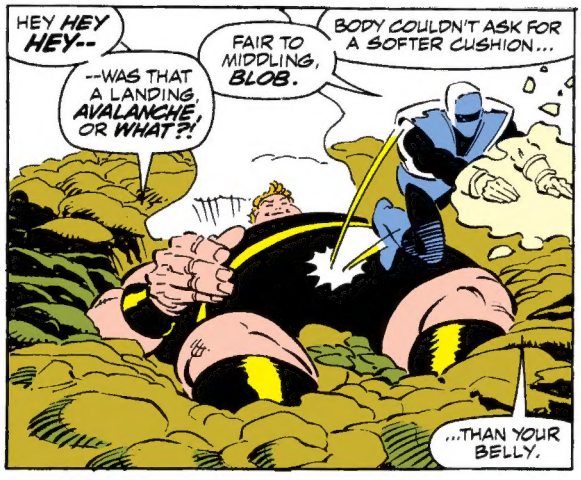
...TURNING IN "STUDENT DISSIDENTS" TO THE AUTHORITIES.
THAT'S CHINA, DOCTOR SHEN.
THIS IS AMERICA.
THERE'S A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.
THE CHILD IS IN THE FIRST CUBICLE.

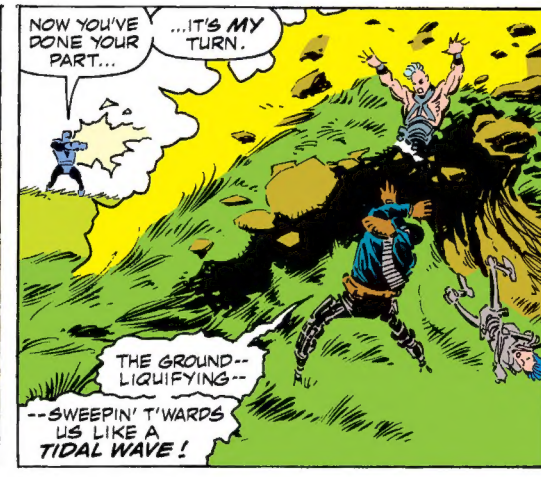
NO, SHE'S NOT.
SHE'S GONE.
IMPOSSIBLE!
SUIT YOURSELF.
WOULD YOU ALERT SECURITY, PLEASE, TO START A SEARCH OF THE BUILDING.
FROM WHAT I SAW OF HER THE OTHER NIGHT--PLUS WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME--

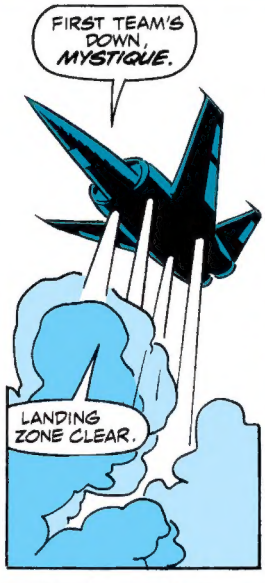
--SHE'S IN NO CONDITION TO GO VERY FAR.
HIS FACE--DOES HE KNOW I CAN SEE IT ON THE MONITOR?

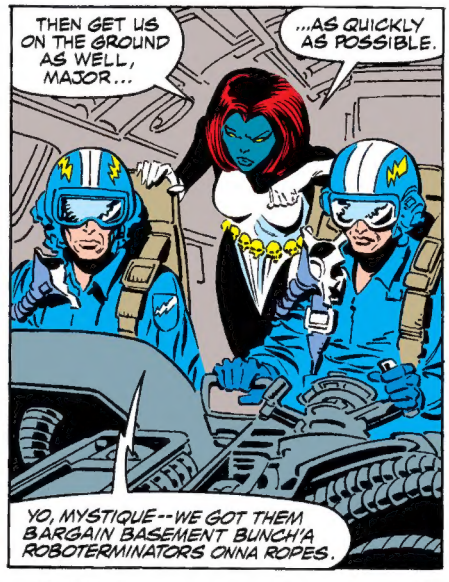
HE SPOKE SO KINDLY BEFORE--
--NOW, HE SMILES LIKE A HUNTING TIGER!
WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS HE?!
WHAT DOES HE TRULY WANT FROM THAT GIRL?!!

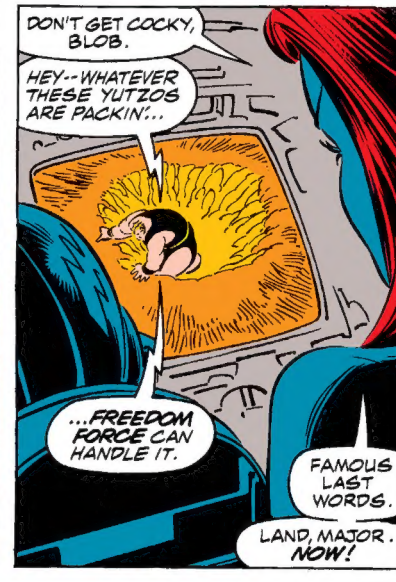

MUIR ISLE...
COULD BE WORSE, MACON.
REST EASY, BONE.
MINIMAL DAMAGE TO YOUR ORGANICS...
...AND I CAN PATCH ENOUGH OF THE BUSTED HARDWARE...
...SO YOU CAN FUNCTION AT NEAR COMBAT CAPACITY.
PRETTY BOY'S GETTING YOUR SPARE CHASSIS.
THAT LIMEY LADY BRIGADIER WAS SOME SHOOTER.
ORDINARY MAN'D BE WORM-FOOD.
NOT US, THOUGH, huh, SARGE?
THANKS TO "BOSS PIERCE", WE'RE PRETTY MUCH INDESTRUCTIBLE.
SURE BEATS THE ALTERNATIVE, BUNKIE!
SO YOU SAY, BONEBREAKER.
ME, I -- HEY, REESE --
--WHATINNASAMHILL...
...IS THAT?!!?
SCATTER!
BFOOM!

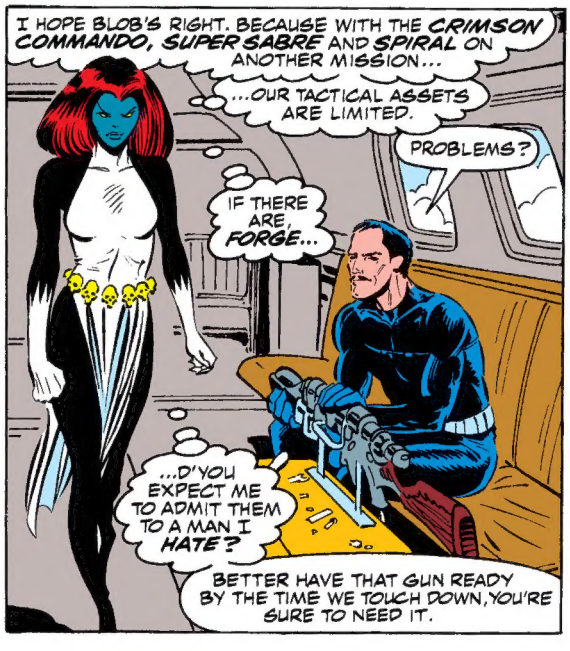

HEY HEY HEY--
--WAS THAT A LANDING, AVALANCHE, OR WHAT?!
FAIR TO MIDDLING, BLOB.
BODY COULDN'T ASK FOR A SOFTER CUSHION...
...THAN YOUR BELLY.

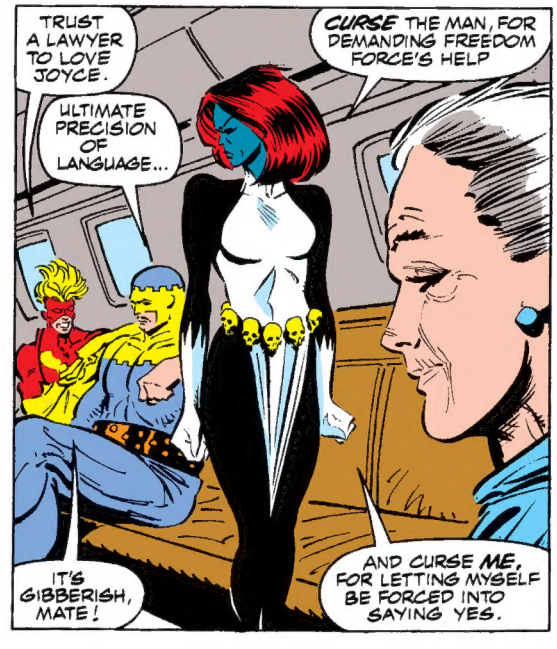

NOW YOU'VE DONE YOUR PART...
...IT'S MY TURN.
THE GROUND--LIQUIFYING--
--SWEEPIN' T'WARDS US LIKE A TIDAL WAVE!

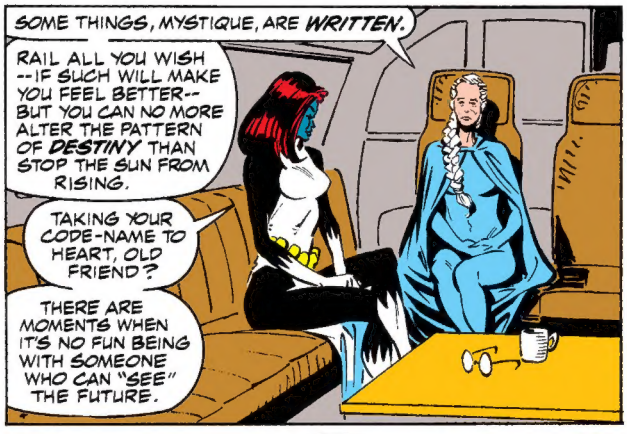

FIRST TEAM'S DOWN, MYSTIQUE.
LANDING ZONE CLEAR.

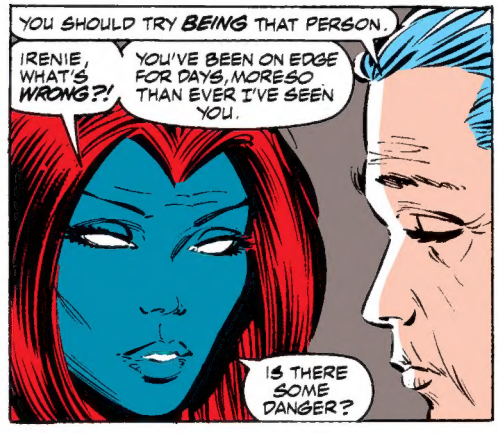

THEN GET US ON THE GROUND AS WELL, MAJOR...
...AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
YO, MYSTIQUE--WE GOT THEM BARGAIN BASEMENT BUNCH'A ROBOTERMINATORS ONNA ROPES.

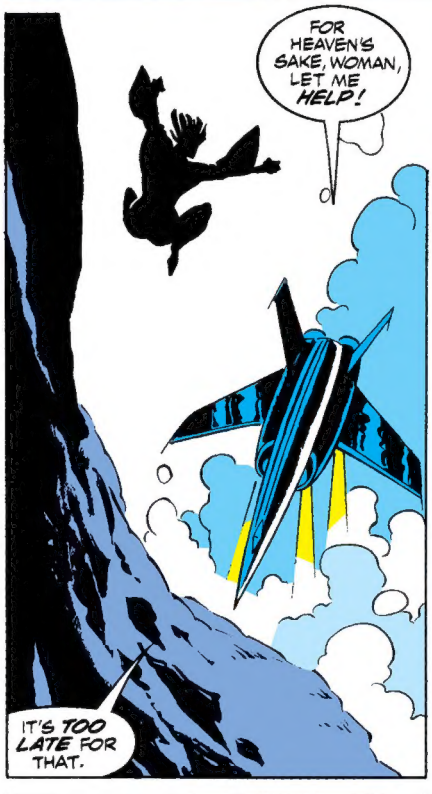

DON'T GET COCKY, BLOB.
HEY--WHATEVER THESE YUTZOS ARE PACKIN'...
...FREEDOM FORCE CAN HANDLE IT.
FAMOUS LAST WORDS.
LAND, MAJOR. NOW!

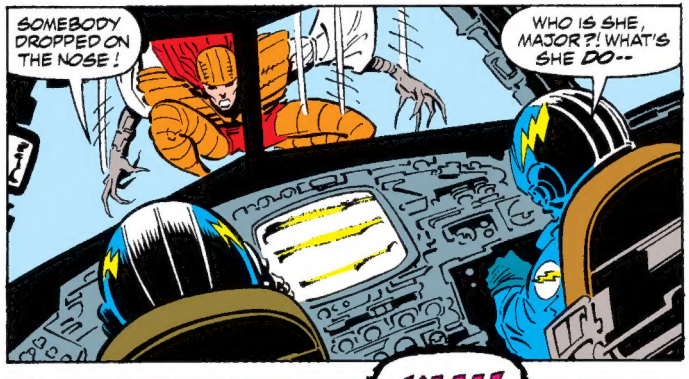

I HOPE BLOB'S RIGHT. BECAUSE WITH THE CRIMSON COMMANDO, SUPERSABRE AND SPIRAL ON ANOTHER MISSION...
...OUR TACTICAL ASSETS ARE LIMITED.
PROBLEMS?
IF THERE ARE, FORGE...
...D'YOU EXPECT ME TO ADMIT THEM TO A MAN I HATE?
BETTER HAVE THAT GUN READY BY THE TIME WE TOUCH DOWN, YOU'RE SURE TO NEED IT.

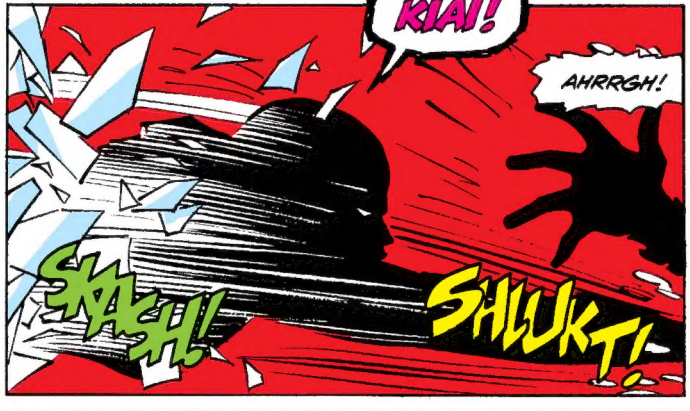

TRUST A LAWYER TO LOVE JOYCE.
ULTIMATE PRECISION OF LANGUAGE...
CURSE THE MAN, FOR DEMANDING FREEDOM FORCE'S HELP
IT'S GIBBERISH, MATE!
AND CURSE ME, FOR LETTING MYSELF BE FORCED INTO SAYING YES.

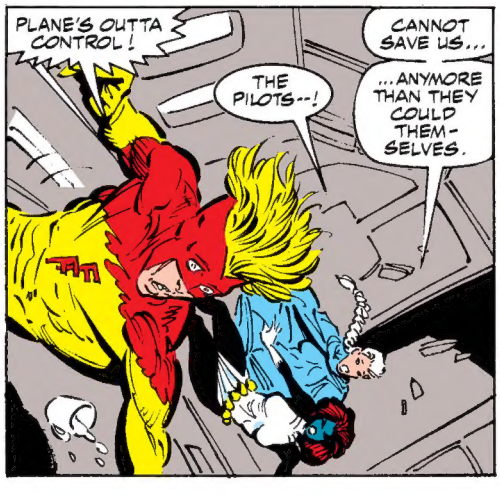

SOME THINGS, MYSTIQUE, ARE WRITTEN.
RAIL ALL YOU WISH --IF SUCH WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER-- BUT YOU CAN NO MORE ALTER THE PATTERN OF DESTINY THAN STOP THE SUN FROM RISING.
TAKING YOUR CODE-NAME TO HEART, OLD FRIEND?
THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN IT'S NO FUN BEING WITH SOMEONE WHO CAN "SEE" THE FUTURE.

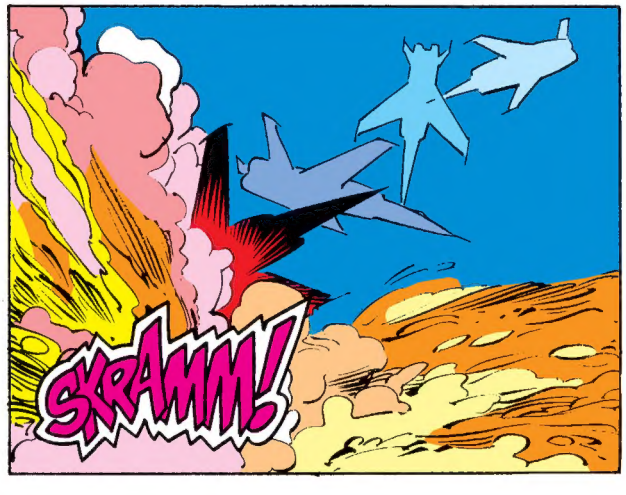

YOU SHOULD TRY BEING THAT PERSON.
IRENIE, WHAT'S WRONG?!
YOU'VE BEEN ON EDGE FOR DAYS, MORESO THAN EVER I'VE SEEN YOU.
IS THERE SOME DANGER?

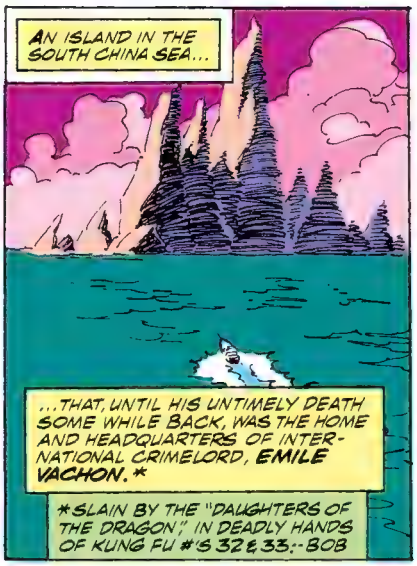

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WOMAN, LET ME HELP!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.

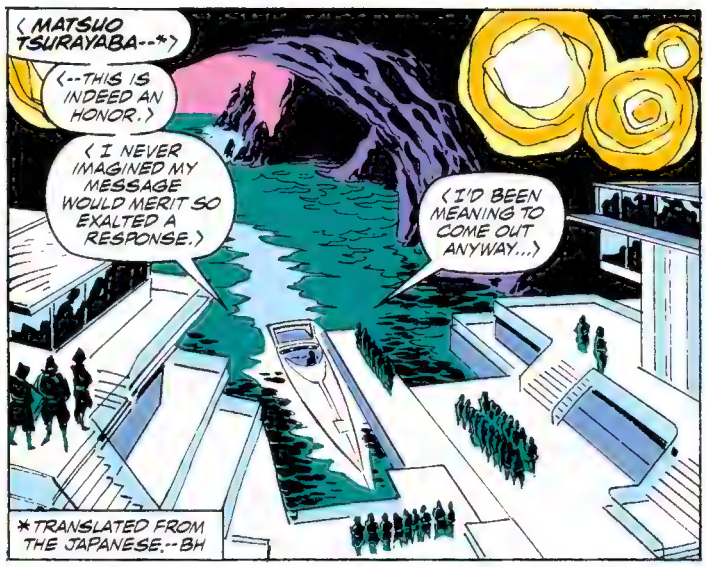

SOMEBODY DROPPED ON THE NOSE!
WHO IS SHE, MAJOR?! WHAT'S SHE DO--

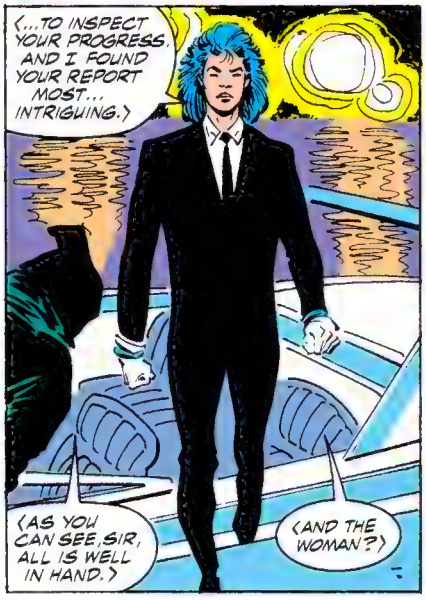

KIAI!
AHRRGH!
SKRACH!
SHLUKT!


PLANE'S OUTTA CONTROL!
THE PILOTS--!
CANNOT SAVE US...
...ANYMORE THAN THEY COULD THEM-SELVES.

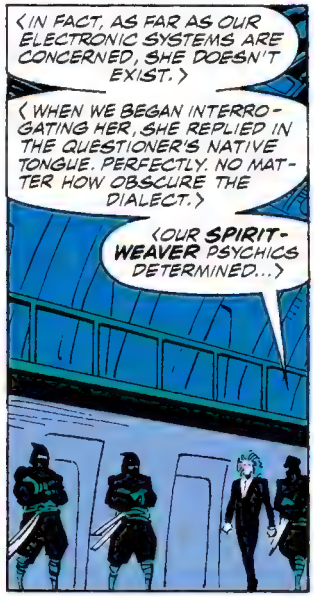

SKRAMM!


AN ISLAND IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA...
...THAT, UNTIL HIS UNTIMELY DEATH SOME WHILE BACK, WAS THE HOME AND HEADQUARTERS OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMELORD, EMILE VACHON.*
*SLAIN BY THE "DAUGHTERS OF THE DRAGON," IN DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #'S 32 & 33:--BOB

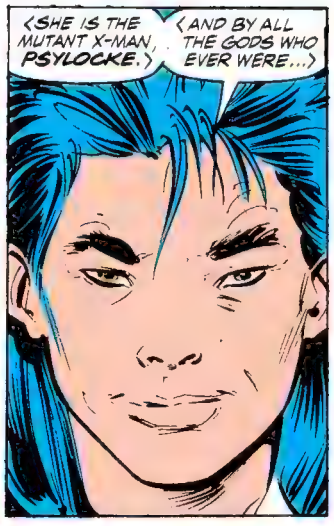

〈MATSUO TSURAYABA--*〉
〈--THIS IS INDEED AN HONOR.〉
〈I NEVER IMAGINED MY MESSAGE WOULD MERIT SO EXALTED A RESPONSE.〉
〈I'D BEEN MEANING TO COME OUT ANYWAY...〉
*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE.--BH

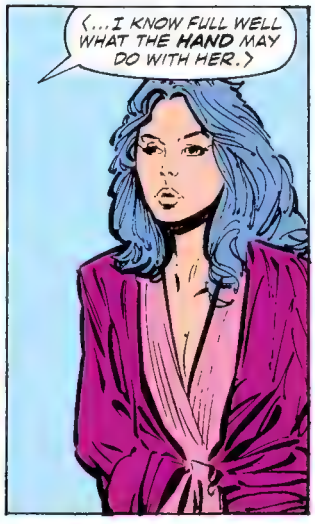

〈...TO INSPECT YOUR PROGRESS, AND I FOUND YOUR REPORT MOST... INTRIGUING.〉
〈AS YOU CAN SEE, SIR, ALL IS WELL IN HAND.〉
〈AND THE WOMAN?〉

〈SHE WAS FOUND A WEEK AGO, WASHED UP ON OUR SHORE. NO CLOTHES, NO IDENTIFICATION-- NO MEMORY, EITHER, WE SOON DETERMINED.〉
〈WHAT ABOUT YOUR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS? HOW COULD SHE APPROACH UNDETECTED?〉
〈SHE IS INVISIBLE TO OUR SCANNERS.〉


〈IN FACT, AS FAR AS OUR ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS ARE CONCERNED, SHE DOESN'T EXIST.〉
〈WHEN WE BEGAN INTERROGATING HER, SHE REPLIED IN THE QUESTIONER'S NATIVE TONGUE. PERFECTLY. NO MATTER HOW OBSCURE THE DIALECT.〉
〈OUR SPIRIT-WEAVER PSYCHICS DETERMINED...〉

〈...THE WOMAN IS A TELEPATH. SHE WAS PICKING UP EACH PERSON'S LANGUAGE FROM THEIR THOUGHTS.〉
〈THAT'S WHEN WE REQUESTED GUIDANCE FROM THE JONIN.〉
〈AND WELL YOU DID, MY FRIEND.〉
〈FOR THIS WOMAN IS KNOWN TO ME.〉


〈SHE IS THE MUTANT X-MAN, PSYLOCKE.〉
〈AND BY ALL THE GODS WHO EVER WERE...〉


〈...I KNOW FULL WELL WHAT THE HAND MAY DO WITH HER.〉

MUIR ISLE...
DESTINY'S STILL ABOARD, I WON'T LEAVE HER!
PUT ME DOWN, FORGE!
THERE WAS ONLY TIME TO GRAB ONE OF YOU, SORRY.

WHO SAID WE NEEDED YOUR HELP!
NOW LET ME GO!

I HAVE DESTINY!
PYRO! SHAKE A LEG, AUSSIE!
SOON AS THIS BLAZE HITS THE FUEL TANKS, THE WHOLE WRECK IS GOING TO --

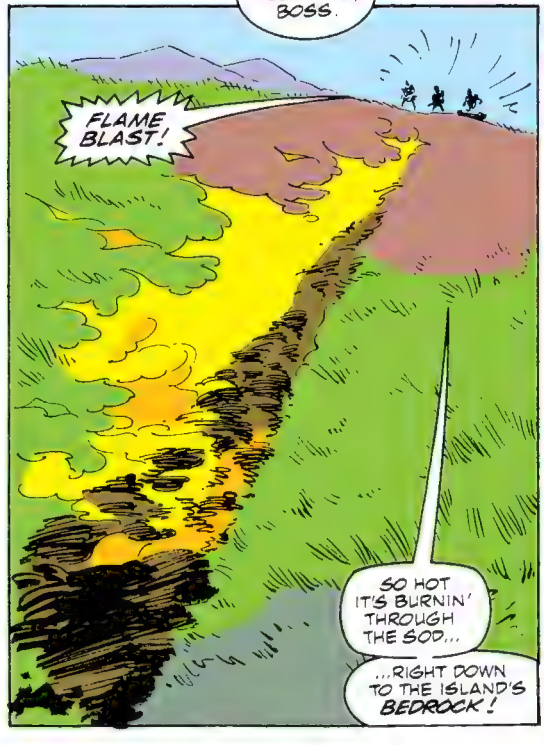
SKBAM!

WE WERE TOO CLOSE--
--THAT FIREBALL SHOULD HAVE ROASTED US--!

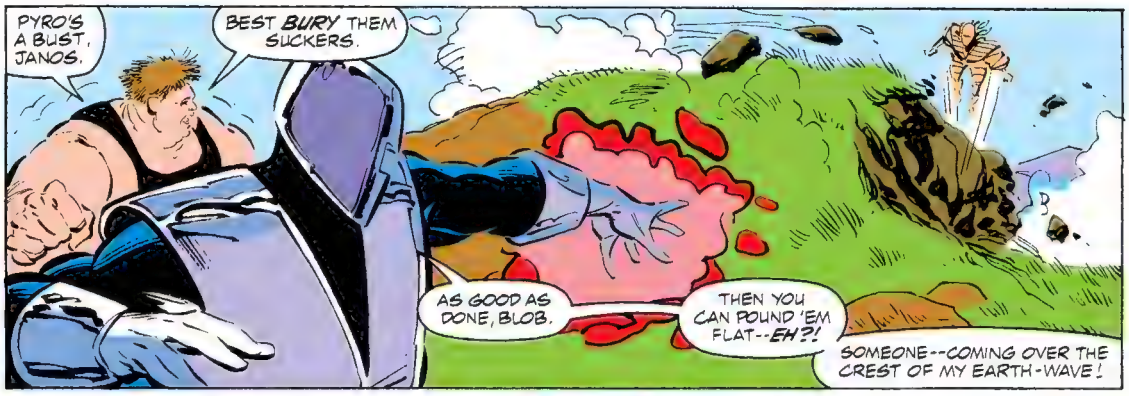
NEVER A NEED TO WORRY ABOUT OPEN FLAMES, MATES...
...WHEN PYRO'S ABOUT TO CONTROL 'EM.

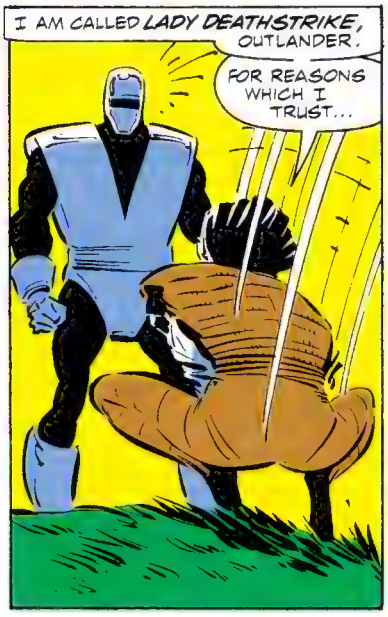
WE'RE SAFE, FORGE.
WOULD YOU RATHER I'D LEFT YOU TO BURN?
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
AS I HAVE BEEN, SINCE BEFORE YOU WERE BORN.
YOUR "SERVICES" ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED.
TAKE DESTINY TO MACTAGGART'S LAB COMPLEX. STAY BY HER.
I'LL BE MORE USE OUT HERE. SO WILL SHE.
I COMMAND FREEDOM FORCE, MISTER.
YOU'LL DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

VAL COOPER MADE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR HOW VALUABLE YOU ARE TO THE UNITED STATES, SO MUCH SO WE'RE OBLIGED TO DO WHATEVER YOU ASK.
IN MY BOOK, THAT MAKES YOU FAR TOO VALUABLE TO RISK IN COMBAT.
IT'S NO SMALL TASK I'M GIVING YOU, FORGE. IF ANY HARM COMES TO DESTINY, IT HAD BETTER BE BECAUSE YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.
PYRO, PAST TIME WE LET THE OPPOSITION KNOW WHAT THEY'RE UP AGAINST.
MY PLEASURE, BOSS.


FLAME BLAST!
SO HOT IT'S BURNIN' THROUGH THE SOD...
...RIGHT DOWN TO THE ISLAND'S BEDROCK!

BIG DEAL.
IT'S ONLY FIRE, BONE
AIN'T EVEN SCORCHIN' MY METAL FRAME.
HECK--MY SYSTEM'S ACTUALLY ABSORBIN' THE KINETIC ENERGY AS ADDITIONAL POWER.

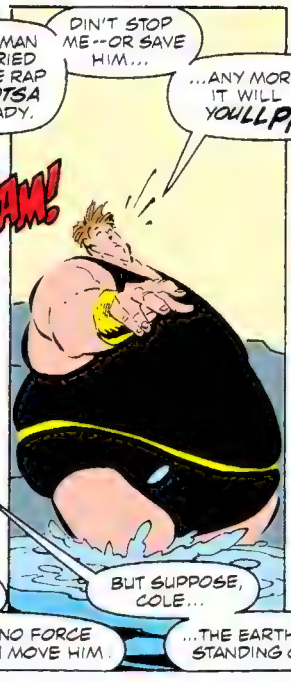

PYRO'S A BUST, JANOS.
BEST BURY THEM SUCKERS.
AS GOOD AS DONE, BLOB.
THEN YOU CAN POUND 'EM FLAT--EH?!
SOMEONE--COMING OVER THE CREST OF MY EARTH-WAVE!

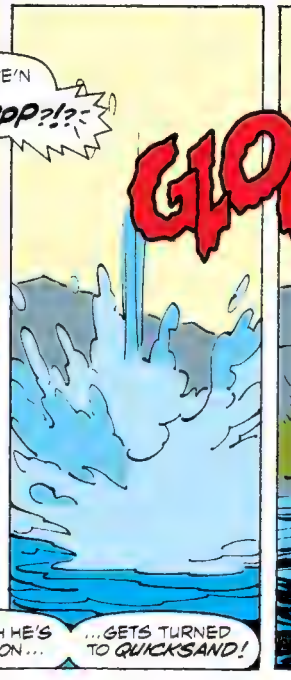

I AM CALLED LADY DEATHSTRIKE, OUTLANDER.
FOR REASONS WHICH I TRUST...

...HAVE JUST BECOME PAINFULLY APPARENT.
AHRRRGH!

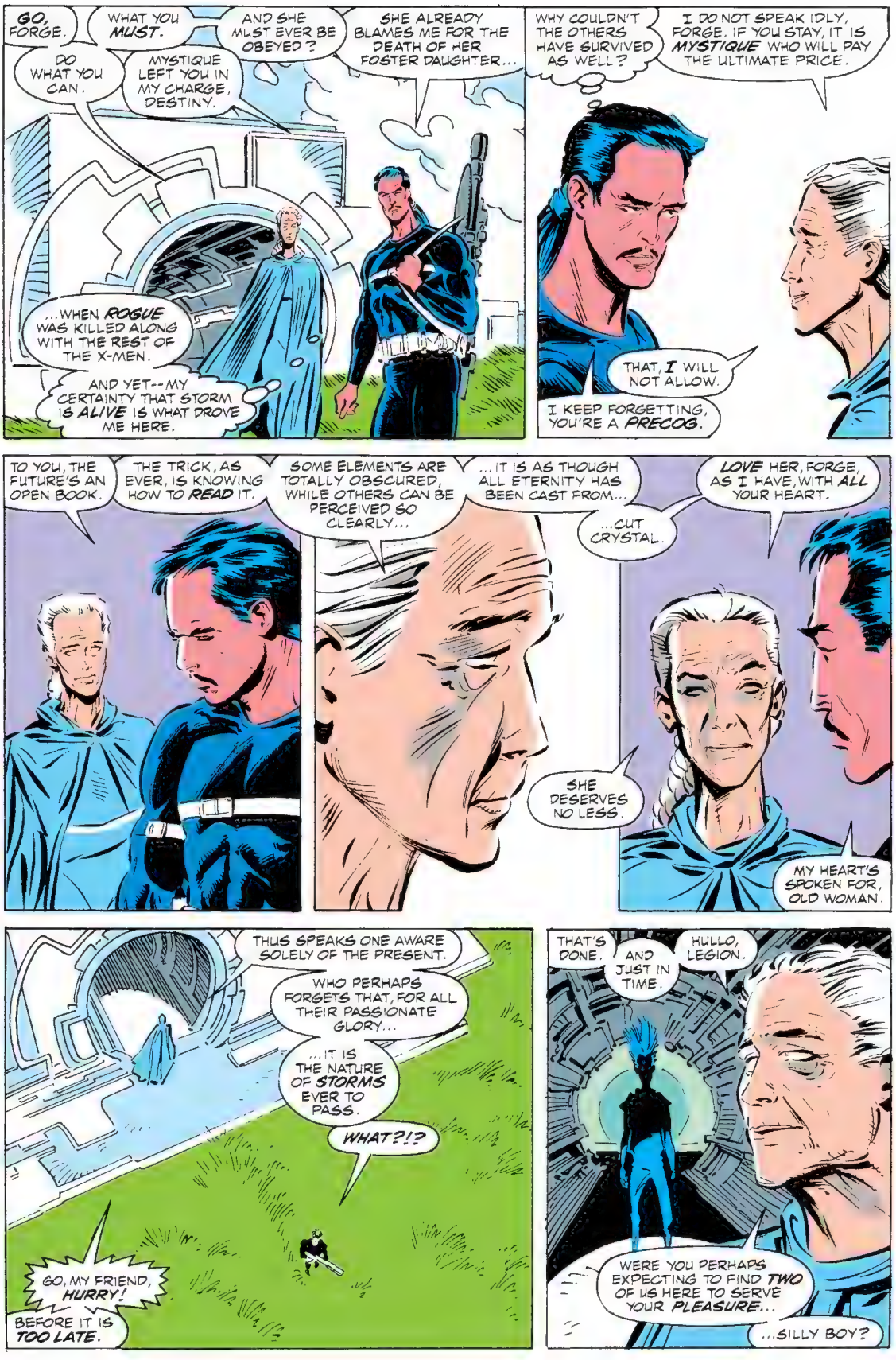
AVALANCHE!
YOU--YOU--!
MY CLAWS, LUMMOX, LIKE WOLVERINE'S, ARE ADAMANTIUM.

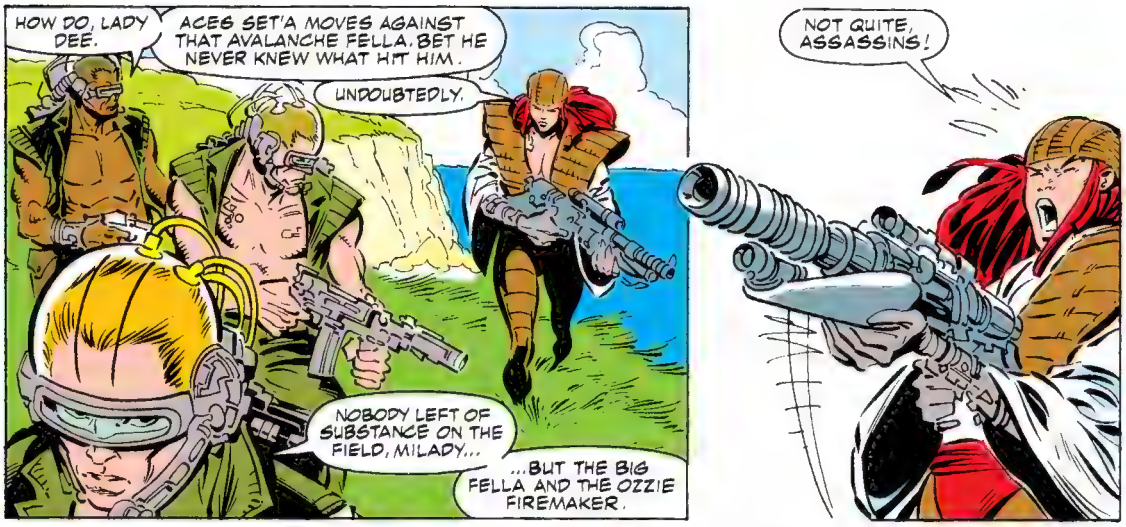
THEY CAN CUT THROUGH ANYTHING.
NO FOOLIN'?
THAT X-MAN RUNT TRIED THE SAME RAP ON ME LOTSA TIMES, LADY.
ZZZAM!
LUMP MEANS BUSINESS, REESE.
BOOK SAYS NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN MOVE HIM.


DIN'T STOP ME--OR SAVE HIM...
...ANY MORE'N IT WILL YOULLPPP?!?
BUT SUPPOSE, COLE...
...THE EARTH HE'S STANDING ON...

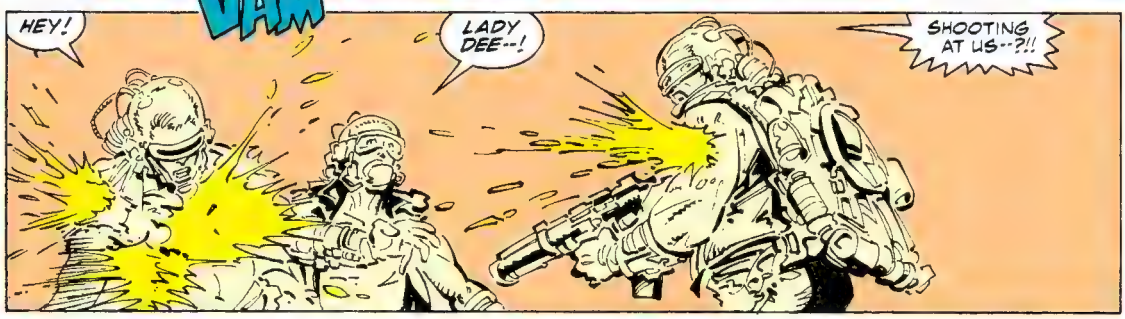

GLOUP!
...GETS TURNED TO QUICKSAND!

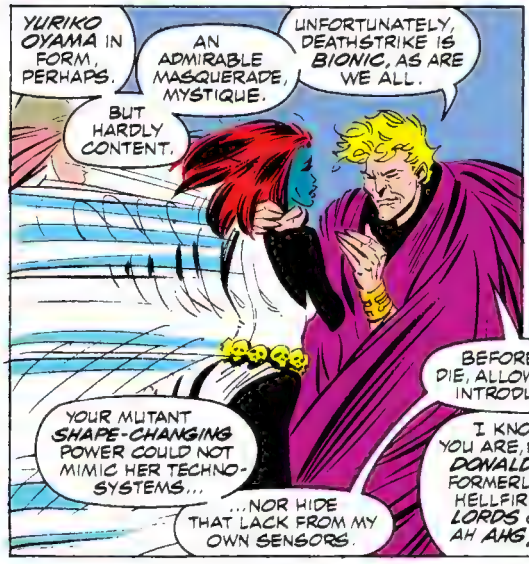
GLOUP!

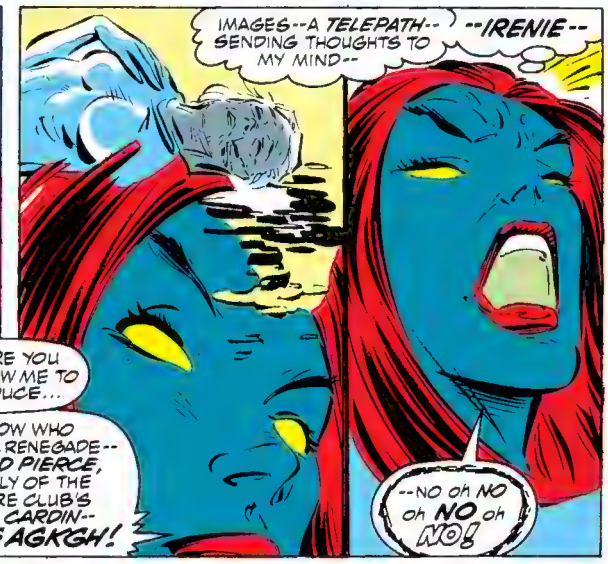

GO, FORGE.
WHAT YOU MUST.
AND SHE MUST EVER BE OBEYED?
SHE ALREADY BLAMES ME FOR THE DEATH OF HER FOSTER DAUGHTER...
DO WHAT YOU CAN.
MYSTIQUE LEFT YOU IN MY CHARGE, DESTINY.
...WHEN ROGUE WAS KILLED ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE X-MEN.
AND YET--MY CERTAINTY THAT STORM IS ALIVE IS WHAT DROVE ME HERE.
WHY COULDN'T THE OTHERS HAVE SURVIVED AS WELL?
I DO NOT SPEAK IDLY, FORGE. IF YOU STAY, IT IS MYSTIQUE WHO WILL PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE.
THAT, I WILL NOT ALLOW.
I KEEP FORGETTING, YOU'RE A PRECOG.
TO YOU, THE FUTURE'S AN OPEN BOOK.
THE TRICK, AS EVER, IS KNOWING HOW TO READ IT.
SOME ELEMENTS ARE TOTALLY OBSCURED, WHILE OTHERS CAN BE PERCEIVED SO CLEARLY...
...IT IS AS THOUGH ALL ETERNITY HAS BEEN CAST FROM...
...CUT CRYSTAL.
LOVE HER, FORGE, AS I HAVE, WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
SHE DESERVES NO LESS.
MY HEART'S SPOKEN FOR, OLD WOMAN.
THUS SPEAKS ONE AWARE SOLELY OF THE PRESENT.
WHO PERHAPS FORGETS THAT, FOR ALL THEIR PASSIONATE GLORY...
...IT IS THE NATURE OF STORMS EVER TO PASS.
WHAT?!?
GO, MY FRIEND, HURRY!
BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.
THAT'S DONE.
AND JUST IN TIME.
HULLO, LEGION.
WERE YOU PERHAPS EXPECTING TO FIND TWO OF US HERE TO SERVE YOUR PLEASURE...
...SILLY BOY?

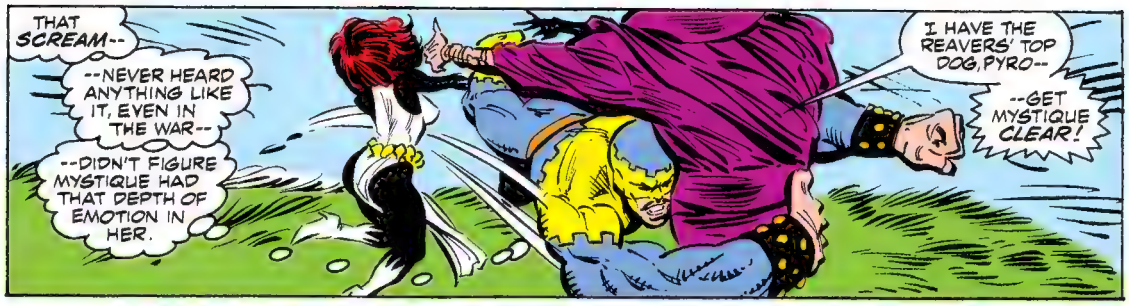

HOW DO, LADY DEE.
ACES SET'A MOVES AGAINST THAT AVALANCHE FELLA. BET HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM.
UNDOUBTEDLY.
NOBODY LEFT OF SUBSTANCE ON THE FIELD, MILADY...
...BUT THE BIG FELLA AND THE OZZIE FIREMAKER.
NOT QUITE, ASSASSINS!

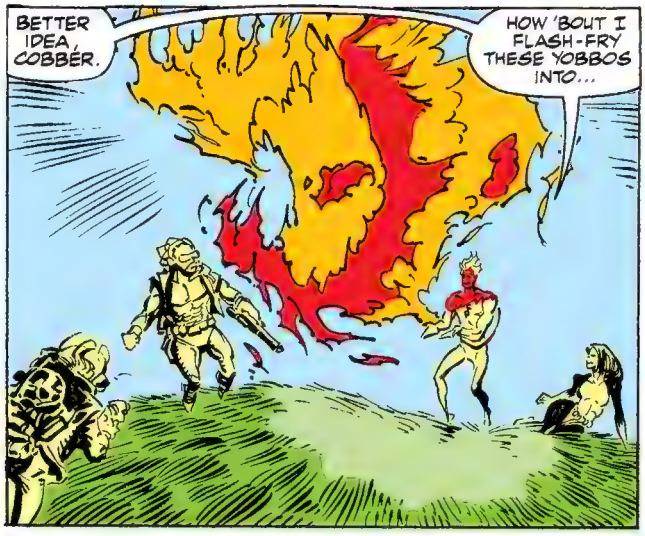
VAM VAM VAM VAM VAM
MY DEAR MY DEAR!
GOOD HELP IS SO HARD TO FIND--
--NOT TO MENTION PUT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN--
AYAIEOW!
--WE SIMPLY CANNOT HAVE YOU INDISCRIMINATELY BLOWING THEM TO BITS.

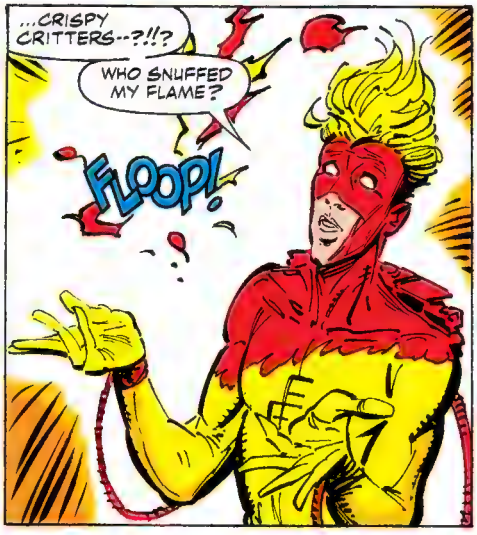

HEY!
LADY DEE--!
SHOOTING AT US--?!!

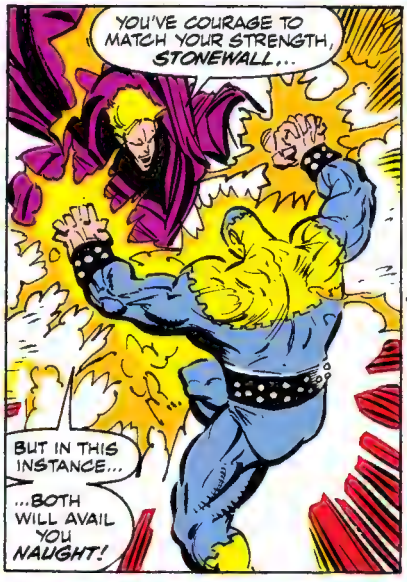

YURIKO OYAMA IN FORM, PERHAPS.
AN ADMIRABLE MASQUERADE, MYSTIQUE.
UNFORTUNATELY, DEATHSTRIKE IS BIONIC, AS ARE WE ALL.
BUT HARDLY CONTENT.
YOUR MUTANT SHAPE-CHANGING POWER COULD NOT MIMIC HER TECHNO-SYSTEMS...
...NOR HIDE THAT LACK FROM MY OWN SENSORS.
BEFORE YOU DIE, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE...
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, RENEGADE-- DONALD PIERCE, FORMERLY OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S LORDS CARDIN-- AH AHS AGKGH!


IMAGES--A TELEPATH-- SENDING THOUGHTS TO MY MIND--
--IRENIE--
--NO oh NO oh NO oh NO!


THAT SCREAM--
--NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE IT, EVEN IN THE WAR--
--DIDN'T FIGURE MYSTIQUE HAD THAT DEPTH OF EMOTION IN HER.
I HAVE THE REAVERS' TOP DOG, PYRO--
--GET MYSTIQUE CLEAR!

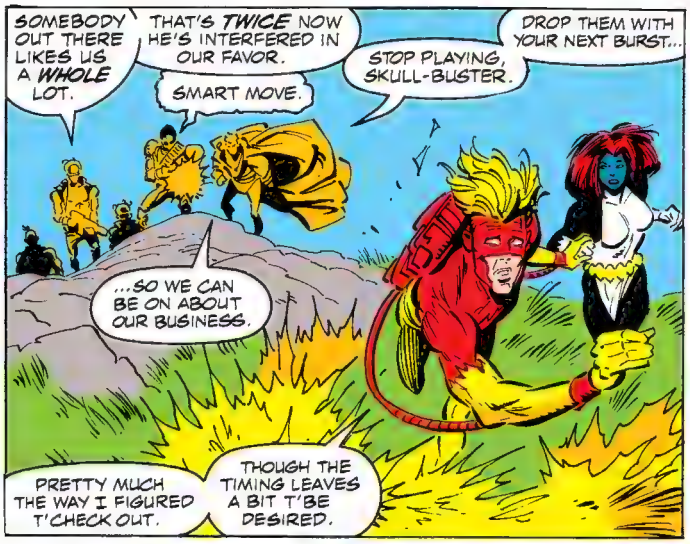

BETTER IDEA, COBBER.
HOW 'BOUT I FLASH-FRY THESE YOBBOS INTO...


...CRISPY CRITTERS--?!!?
WHO SNUFFED MY FLAME?
FLOOP!

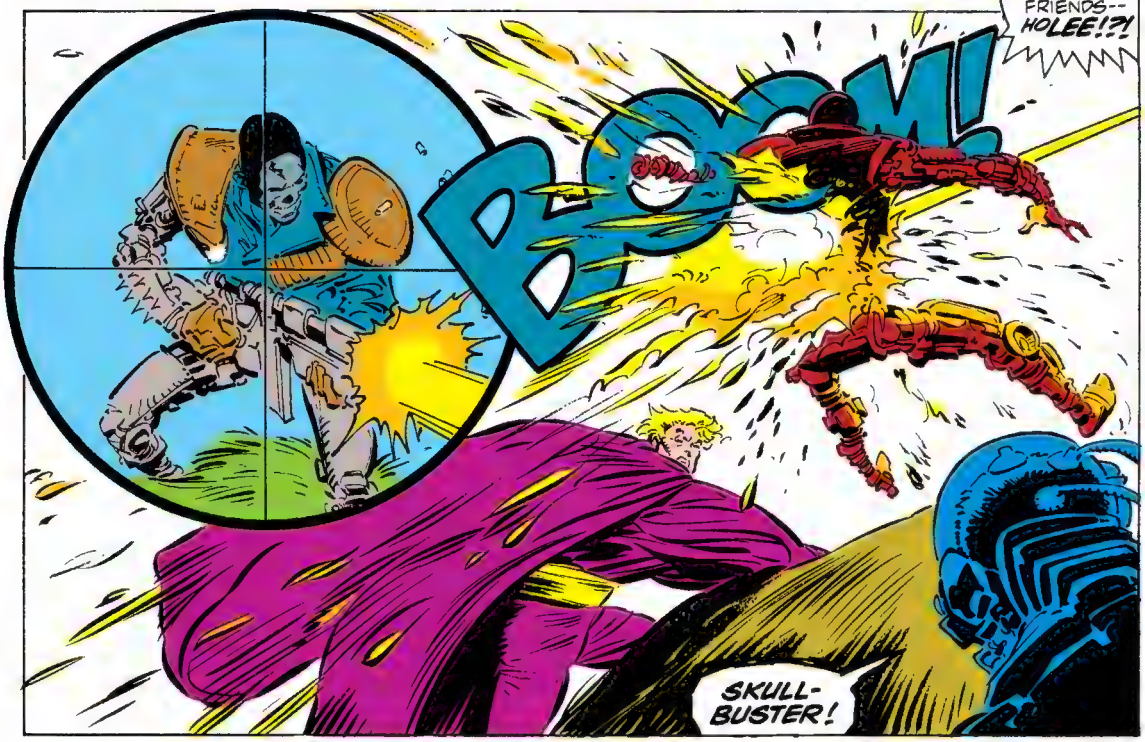

YOU'VE COURAGE TO MATCH YOUR STRENGTH, STONEWALL...
BUT IN THIS INSTANCE...
...BOTH WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT!

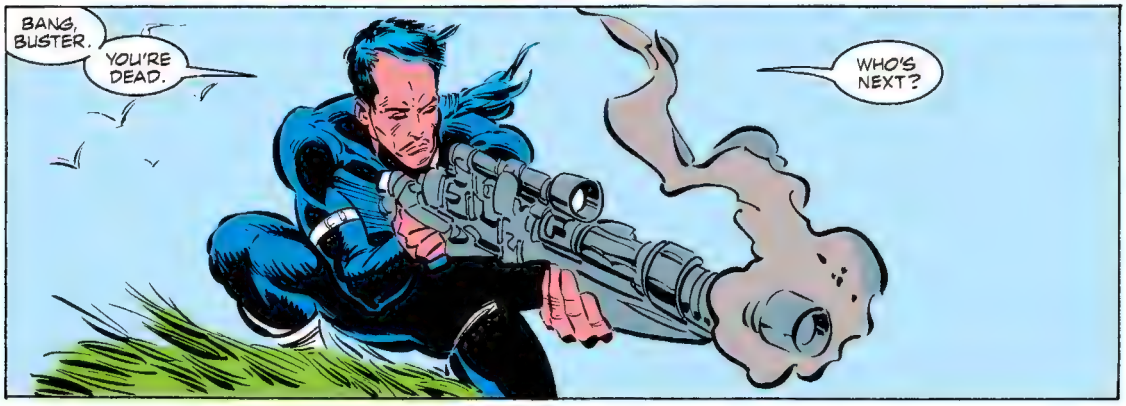
THERE'S NO WALL BEEN BUILT...
STONEY!
...THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN'T SMASH DOWN!

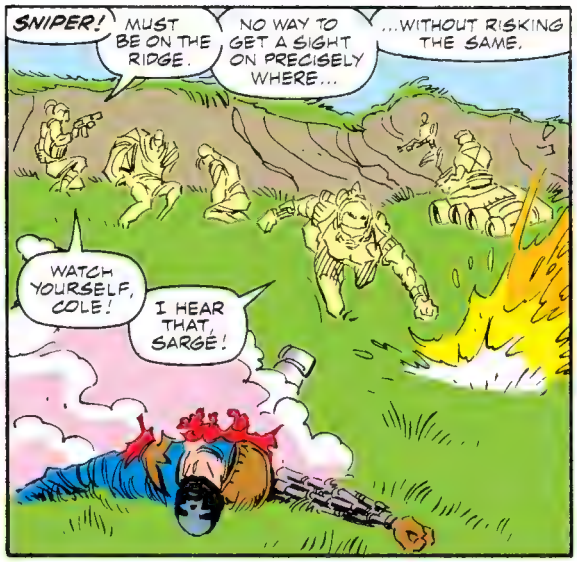
HE--
--HE'S--!


SOMEBODY OUT THERE LIKES US A WHOLE LOT.
THAT'S TWICE NOW HE'S INTERFERED IN OUR FAVOR.
SMART MOVE.
STOP PLAYING, SKULL-BUSTER.
DROP THEM WITH YOUR NEXT BURST...
...SO WE CAN BE ON ABOUT OUR BUSINESS.
PRETTY MUCH THE WAY I FIGURED T'CHECK OUT.
THOUGH THE TIMING LEAVES A BIT T'BE DESIRED.

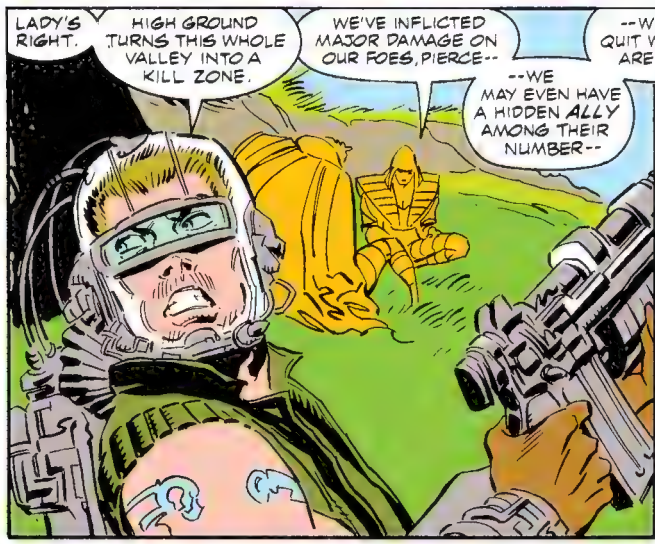
I'LL NEVER KNOW IF MY NEW BOOK'S A BESTSELLER.
I'M SORRY I BROUGHT YOU TO THIS, PYRO.
BREAKS O' THE GAME, LUV.
KNEW THAT WHEN I SIGNED ON.
WORSE WAYS TO GO, THAN WITH FRIENDS-- HOLEE!?!

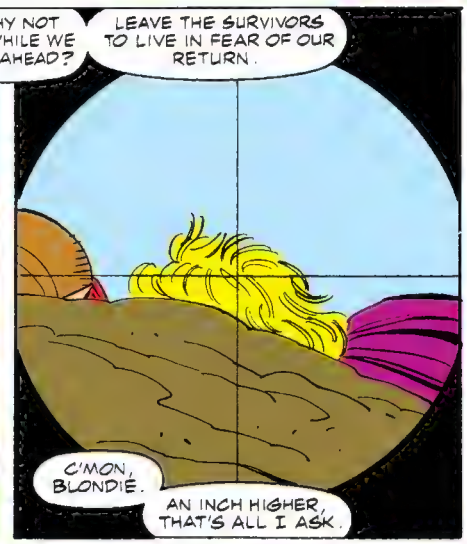

BOOM!
SKULL-BUSTER!


BANG, BUSTER.
YOU'RE DEAD.
WHO'S NEXT?

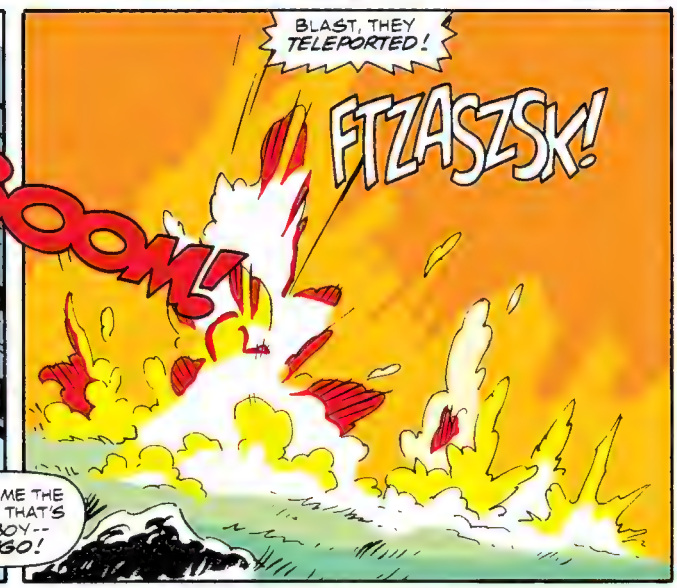

SNIPER!
MUST BE ON THE RIDGE.
NO WAY TO GET A SIGHT ON PRECISELY WHERE...
...WITHOUT RISKING THE SAME.
WATCH YOURSELF, COLE!
I HEAR THAT, SARGE!

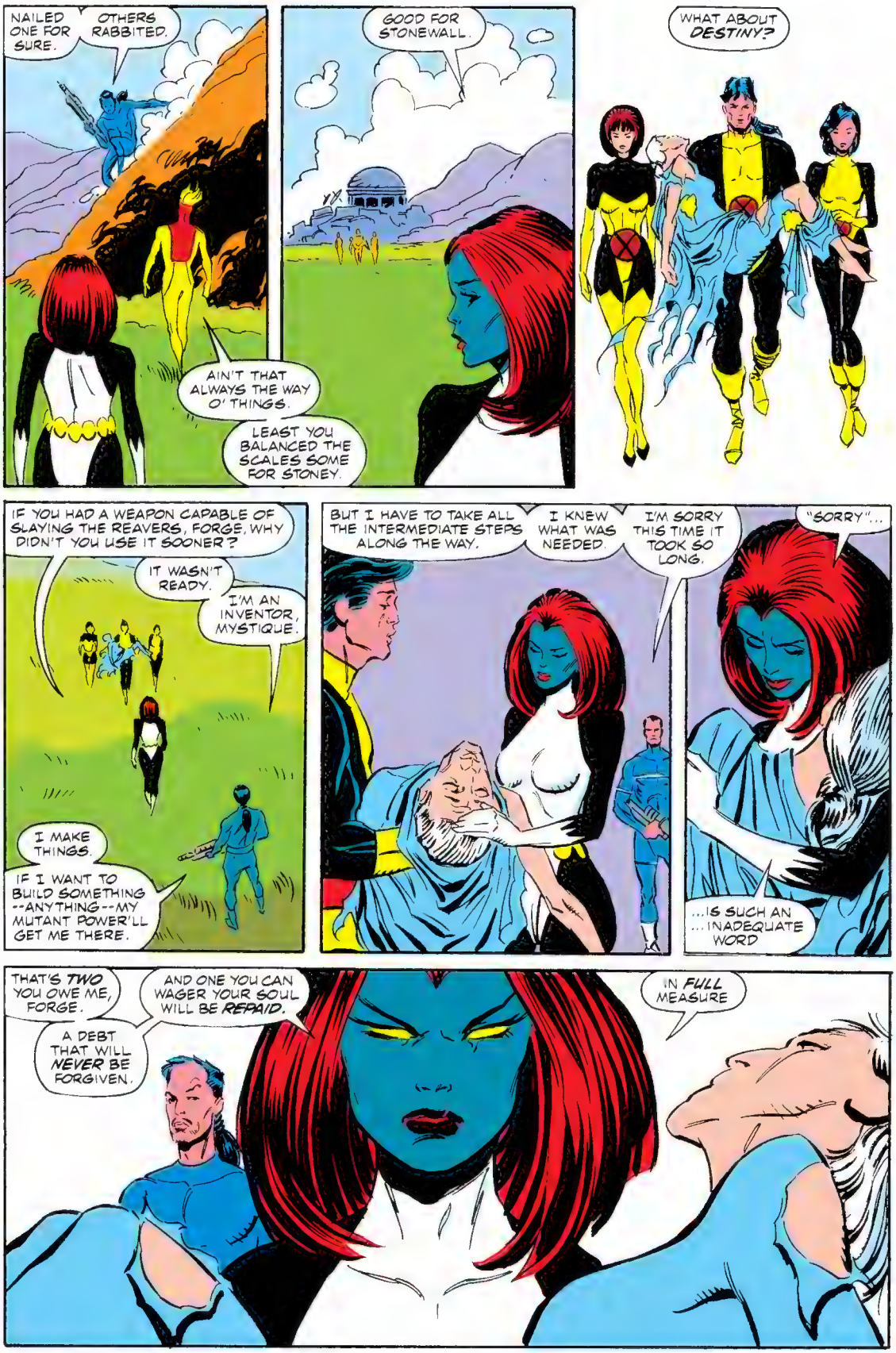
SHOOTER'S GOOD, BUT HE AIN'T PERFECT.
DIAGNOSTIC READS ACROSS-THE BOARD DISRUPTION OF HIS BIONICS SYSTEMS.
SKULLY'S HISTORY, PIERCE, TOTALLY FRIED!
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO COUNTER THIS.
NOT HERE, LORD, NOT NOW.

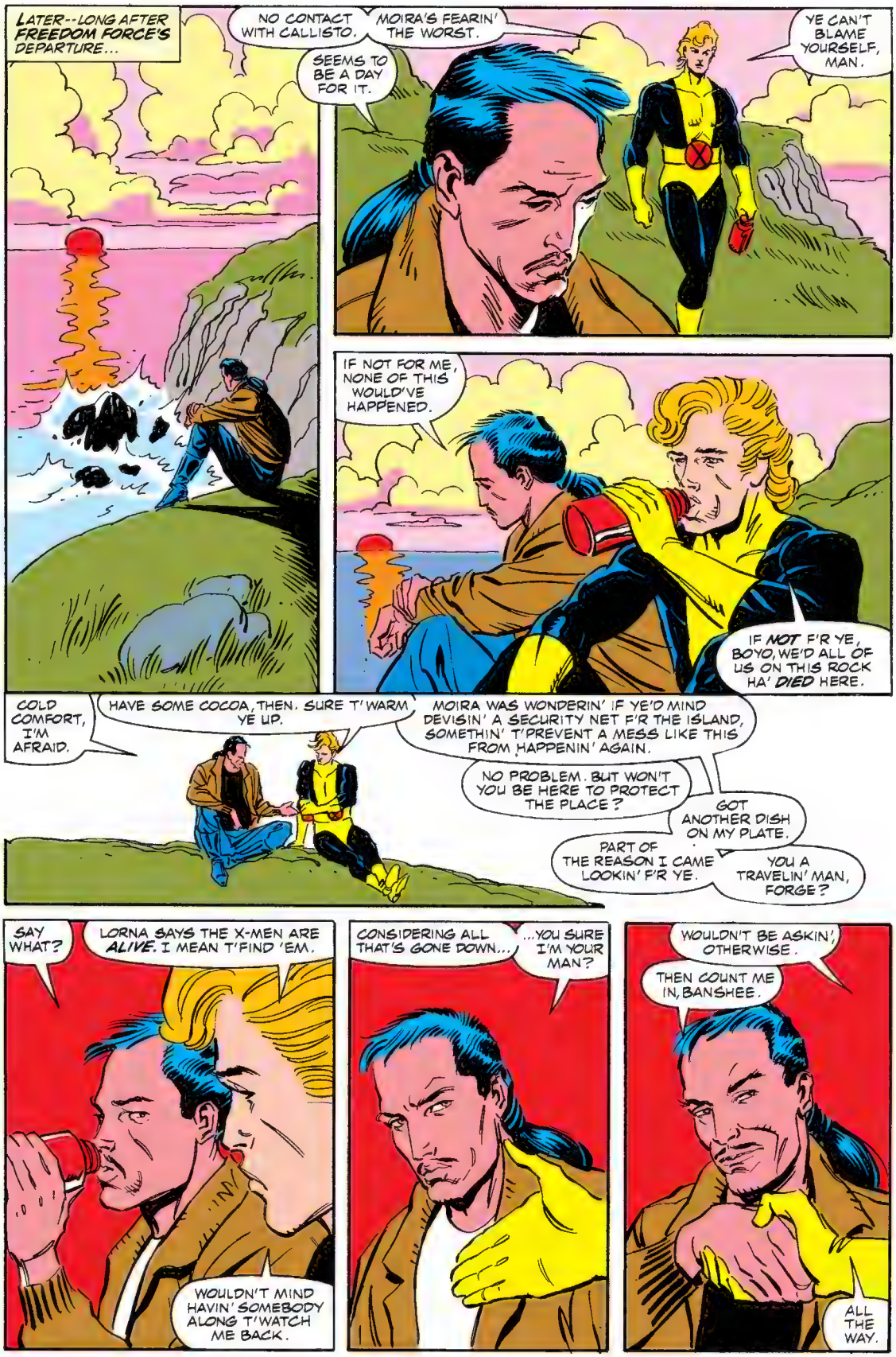

LADY'S RIGHT.
HIGH GROUND TURNS THIS WHOLE VALLEY INTO A KILL ZONE.
WE'VE INFLICTED MAJOR DAMAGE ON OUR FOES, PIERCE--
--WHY NOT QUIT WHILE WE ARE AHEAD?
--WE MAY EVEN HAVE A HIDDEN ALLY AMONG THEIR NUMBER--

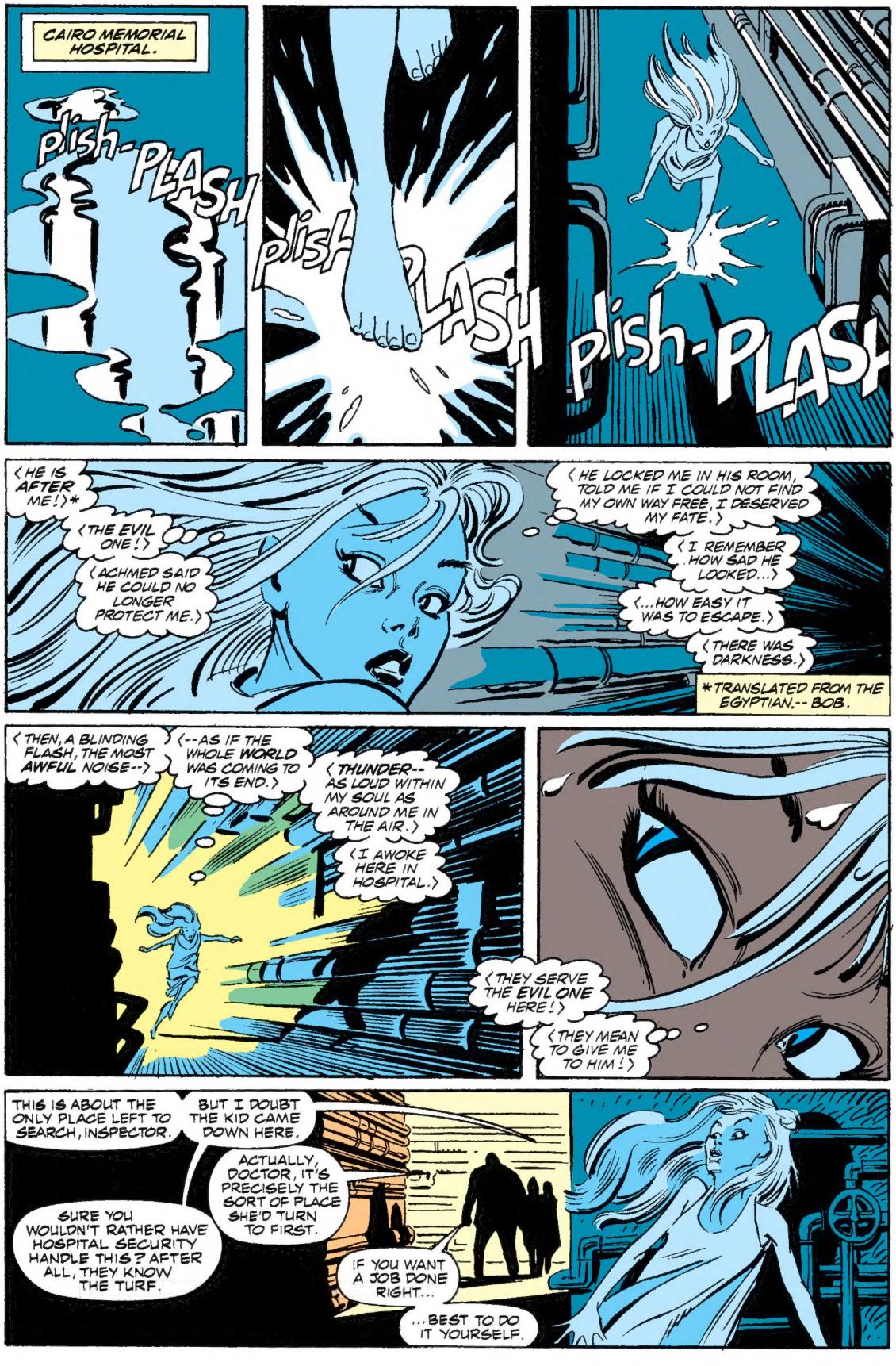

LEAVE THE SURVIVORS TO LIVE IN FEAR OF OUR RETURN.
C'MON, BLONDIE.
AN INCH HIGHER, THAT'S ALL I ASK.

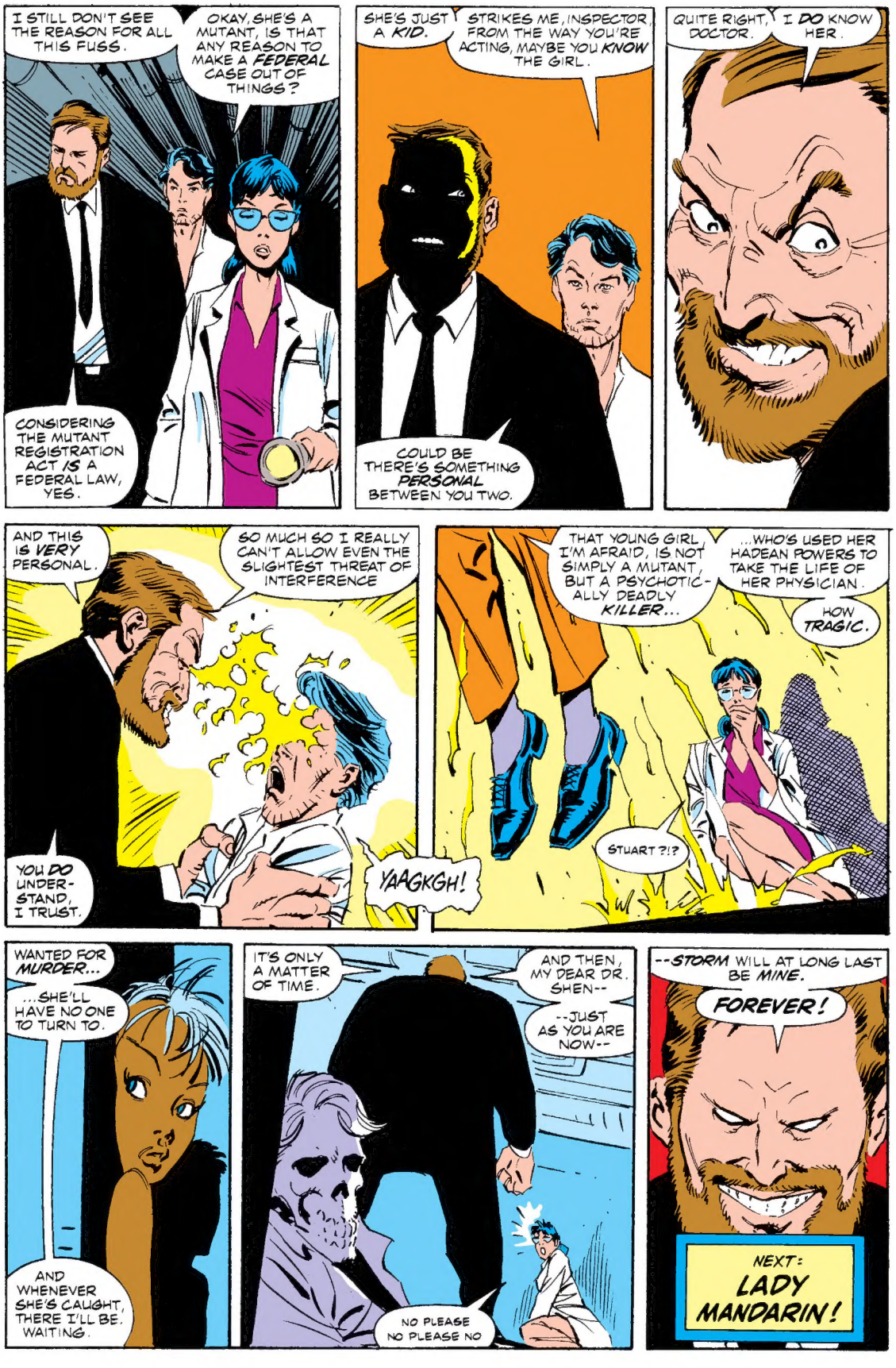
POP THAT PRETTY HEAD OF YOURS INTO VIEW...
...SO I CAN BLOW IT CLEAN OFF--
--C'MON C'MON C'MON--
--GIMME THE SHOT, THAT'S MY BOY--BINGO!


BLAST, THEY TELEPORTED!
FTZASZSK!
BOOM!


NAILED ONE FOR SURE.
OTHERS RABBITED.
AIN'T THAT ALWAYS THE WAY O' THINGS.
LEAST YOU BALANCED THE SCALES SOME FOR STONEY.
GOOD FOR STONEWALL.
WHAT ABOUT DESTINY?
IF YOU HAD A WEAPON CAPABLE OF SLAYING THE REAVERS, FORGE, WHY DIDN'T YOU USE IT SOONER?
IT WASN'T READY.
I'M AN INVENTOR, MYSTIQUE.
I MAKE THINGS.
IF I WANT TO BUILD SOMETHING --ANYTHING--MY MUTANT POWER'LL GET ME THERE.
BUT I HAVE TO TAKE ALL THE INTERMEDIATE STEPS ALONG THE WAY.
I KNEW WHAT WAS NEEDED.
I'M SORRY THIS TIME IT TOOK SO LONG.
"SORRY"...
...IS SUCH AN ...INADEQUATE WORD
THAT'S TWO YOU OWE ME, FORGE.
AND ONE YOU CAN WAGER YOUR SOUL WILL BE REPAID.
A DEBT THAT WILL NEVER BE FORGIVEN.
IN FULL MEASURE


LATER--LONG AFTER FREEDOM FORCE'S DEPARTURE...
NO CONTACT WITH CALLISTO.
SEEMS TO BE A DAY FOR IT.
MOIRA'S FEARIN' THE WORST.
YE CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF, MAN.
IF NOT FOR ME, NONE OF THIS WOULD'VE HAPPENED.
IF NOT F'R YE, BOYO, WE'D ALL OF US ON THIS ROCK HA' DIED HERE.
COLD COMFORT, I'M AFRAID.
HAVE SOME COCOA, THEN. SURE T' WARM YE UP.
MOIRA WAS WONDERIN' IF YE'D MIND DEVISIN' A SECURITY NET F'R THE ISLAND, SOMETHIN' T'PREVENT A MESS LIKE THIS FROM HAPPENIN' AGAIN.
NO PROBLEM. BUT WON'T YOU BE HERE TO PROTECT THE PLACE?
GOT ANOTHER DISH ON MY PLATE.
PART OF THE REASON I CAME LOOKIN' F'R YE.
YOU A TRAVELIN' MAN, FORGE?
SAY WHAT?
LORNA SAYS THE X-MEN ARE ALIVE. I MEAN T'FIND 'EM.
WOULDN'T MIND HAVIN' SOMEBODY ALONG T'WATCH ME BACK.
CONSIDERING ALL THAT'S GONE DOWN...
...YOU SURE I'M YOUR MAN?
WOULDN'T BE ASKIN', OTHERWISE.
THEN COUNT ME IN, BANSHEE.
ALL THE WAY.


CAIRO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.
plish-PLASH
plish PLASH
plish-PLASH
〈HE IS AFTER ME!〉*
〈THE EVIL ONE!〉
〈ACHMED SAID HE COULD NO LONGER PROTECT ME.〉
〈HE LOCKED ME IN HIS ROOM, TOLD ME IF I COULD NOT FIND MY OWN WAY FREE, I DESERVED MY FATE.〉
〈I REMEMBER HOW SAD HE LOOKED...〉
〈...HOW EASY IT WAS TO ESCAPE.〉
〈THERE WAS DARKNESS.〉
*TRANSLATED FROM THE EGYPTIAN.-- BOB.
〈THEN, A BLINDING FLASH, THE MOST AWFUL NOISE--〉
〈--AS IF THE WHOLE WORLD WAS COMING TO ITS END.〉
〈THUNDER-- AS LOUD WITHIN MY SOUL AS AROUND ME IN THE AIR.〉
〈I AWOKE HERE IN HOSPITAL.〉
〈THEY SERVE THE EVIL ONE HERE!〉
〈THEY MEAN TO GIVE ME TO HIM!〉
THIS IS ABOUT THE ONLY PLACE LEFT TO SEARCH, INSPECTOR.
BUT I DOUBT THE KID CAME DOWN HERE.
ACTUALLY, DOCTOR, IT'S PRECISELY THE SORT OF PLACE SHE'D TURN TO FIRST.
SURE YOU WOULDN'T RATHER HAVE HOSPITAL SECURITY HANDLE THIS? AFTER ALL, THEY KNOW THE TURF.
IF YOU WANT A JOB DONE RIGHT...
...BEST TO DO IT YOURSELF.


I STILL DON'T SEE THE REASON FOR ALL THIS FUSS.
OKAY, SHE'S A MUTANT, IS THAT ANY REASON TO MAKE A FEDERAL CASE OUT OF THINGS?
CONSIDERING THE MUTANT REGISTRATION ACT IS A FEDERAL LAW, YES.
SHE'S JUST A KID.
STRIKES ME, INSPECTOR, FROM THE WAY YOU'RE ACTING, MAYBE YOU KNOW THE GIRL.
COULD BE THERE'S SOMETHING PERSONAL BETWEEN YOU TWO.
QUITE RIGHT, DOCTOR.
I DO KNOW HER.
AND THIS IS VERY PERSONAL.
SO MUCH SO I REALLY CAN'T ALLOW EVEN THE SLIGHTEST THREAT OF INTERFERENCE
YOU DO UNDER-STAND, I TRUST.
YAAGKGH!
THAT YOUNG GIRL I'M AFRAID, IS NOT SIMPLY A MUTANT, BUT A PSYCHOTIC-ALLY DEADLY KILLER...
...WHO'S USED HER HADEAN POWERS TO TAKE THE LIFE OF HER PHYSICIAN.
HOW TRAGIC.
STUART ?!?
WANTED FOR MURDER...
...SHE'LL HAVE NO ONE TO TURN TO.
AND WHENEVER SHE'S CAUGHT, THERE I'LL BE. WAITING.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.
AND THEN, MY DEAR DR. SHEN--
--JUST AS YOU ARE NOW--
NO PLEASE NO PLEASE NO
--STORM WILL AT LONG LAST BE MINE.
FOREVER!
NEXT: LADY MANDARIN!

BOB HARRAS: editor — DARYL EDELMAN: assistant editor

X-MAIL

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP—
387 Park Avenue South—New York, New York—10016

Attention correspondents: if you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear X-People,

I just finished reading X-MEN #250, and WOW! You guys had me on the edge of my seat from beginning to end, but for different reasons.

When I saw the cover, I was furious. First—Rogue's demise, although her case may not be permanent, as the Siege Perilous is not a permanent thing. This is demonstrated by the return of the Reavers. Maybe Rogue will come back in full control of her powers. After all, the Siege is supposed to judge you and then give you a second chance, a new lease on life), then Storm, and now Polaris!? That's three X-Men in four issues!! How could you??!!! As if being possessed by Malice wasn't enough, now Zaladane reveals she is Lorna's sister, and that she is going to kill her!!

And then I saw page 19, ALL RIGHT!! Where did those new powers come from though, I wonder? Could they somehow be Rogue's? At least Alex and Lorna are back together again. I must admit, they're my favorite mutant couple, next to Scott and Jean of course. Maybe the four of them could hold a double wedding? (Ok, maybe I'm rushing things a bit. Just don't leave Lorna in the Savage Land—*please*!)

All in all, a great issue! Great story, great art—great everthing! All this, and Ka-Zar (and Shanna and son), too! This kind of magic brings back memories of the classic Claremont-Byrne days. But what's this about a NEW team of X-Men. . .?

Keep up the great work!

Mike Abbiuso
5 Carolina Drive
Milford, MA 01757

Dear X-Folk,

Okay. Who was the boob who spelled Havok's last name wrong on page 8, panel 5 of X-MEN #250? "Summers," guys, not "Sommers." Also: now, why would you go and print something like "Polaris No More" on the cover, knowing full well we'll take it seriously after the fates of Rogue and Storm have been thus heralded in two very recent issues? Especially when the result is the removal of Malice from Lorna's psyche, and an increase in Polaris's now-multiple powers? Ever hear of "crying wolf?" Not good.

I also feel I must say that I do not admire the killing-off of the two most strongly developed characters besides Colossus and Wolvie (Rogue and Ororo, to wit!). Y'see, Wolvie's never around anymore, and Peter. . .well, he only seems to worry about the moral repercussions of killing—important, but come, now, surely he's got more in his head than that! So that leaves us with Betsy, who we never really got to know on more than a superficial level; Havok, who's too tormented to be of any use to anybody; and Dazz, who, though she appears to be the only one with a sense of humor anymore, has only been with the team a short while, and seems to change moods constantly, from depressed to wild, to zany, to serious, to humorous, and most recently, to remorseful over Rogue's situation. And I'm betting she's the next to go.

Zaladane has no personality. She's just the stereotypical villainess. Dull!

Awh, c'mon, where's Tom Orzechowski? We miss him!

A whole new team of X-MEN? Like, with no old ones? Well then, what's to keep us interested in it? We care about NOW's X-Men! It was okay last time we had an All-New X-Men, 'cause of Scott, and all the old members kept in touch. But how can that happen if you're killing everyone off?

There are but two good things I can say for this issue: I loved Steve Leialoha's inks ('scuse me, finishes!) I always have! I've not seen Peter (Peter SENIOR, that is!) look as good as he did on page 20, panel 6 since the last time Rick Leonardi drew him. Good job!

Number two: I liked the re-appearance of Peter, Neral's son. I am, of course, assuming he is Peter Jr. . .?

So, until Wolvie returns to the X-Men (if there're still some X-Men to return to. . .!), Make Mine Marvel. And even after that, but until then, you can find me at the comics rack reading the far better of Chris's current endeavors, EXCALIBUR!

Elizabeth Garrett
(No address given)

Now, now, Elizabeth. . .we weren't crying Wolf at all. Lorna Dane's magnetic powers are gone for the nonce. . .therefore, she can hardly call herself "Polaris" any longer.

(And, you've no doubt realized by now, Storm is not dead. . .merely reduced to childhood by the mysterious Nanny. . .and Rogue, well,let's wait and see, shall we?)

Dear X-Men,

Did I read right when you said, "a whole new team of X-Men" on the letters page of issue #250? I am praying that I did read right. The team has been needing new life breathed into it for a long time now, and this is what it needed—a whole new team. They say occasional change is good for the soul, and that even applies to comic books. The team was going nowhere as it stood, everything being explored except for Wolverine's true origin (and, to be honest with you, I am getting tired of Wolverine).

However, this is not the real reason I am writing. I am writing in response to the recent developments with Polaris (even though she is no longer truly Polaris). With this issue I believe I fell in love with her. Lorna is one of the most underused heroines in the Marvel Universe, and I would enjoy seeing a lot more of her in the months and years to come.

Also, to make a good comic even better, I couldn't believe that was Mark Silvestri's penciling in issue #250! Maybe it was the "finisher", I don't know; it just looked so different from other issues that I just had to say something, and I don't know enough about comic book art to be able to tell who deserves the real credit.

Anyway, until Mary Jane Watson-Parker shaves her head bald, Make Mine Marvel!

Tom Davidson
865-191A Broadway Ave.
Holbrook, NY 11741

Issue #250 (as well as #252) was "finished" over Marc's breakdowns by the multi-talented Steve Leialoha, which accounts for the different look that month, Tom.

Lorna will be staying on Muir Island for the foreseeable future. . .and if events this issue are any indication, this once-safe haven for mutants is definitely headed for trouble.

Dear Ex-Friends,

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THE X-MEN?

Are you guys trying to give me a heart attack or just bust a vital blood vessel to my brain?!!

It started in X-MEN #247 when Rogue got pulled into the Siege Perilous! Wholly Toledo!

Then in X-MEN #248 Longshot leaves and Storm dies!! GEE WHIZ!!

And in X-MEN #250, Psylocke sees the X-Men, DEAD! (You guys are on a killing frenzy!) if they return to Australia so what do you guys do but drop them off in Australia, all four of them (you call that a team!) is that convenience or what!!

Then, at the end of #250 (page 29, panel 3) Lorna looks a little like Rogue! Does it mean something or are you guys trying to drive me INSANE?!

Plus, you spelled Alex's last name Sommers, not the usual "Summers" on page 8, panel 5. You guys are trying to get me into a jacket with nice straps and big, shiny buckles and then make me go and live in a RUBBER ROOM!!!!

So, if you don't fix the X-Men and get Wolverine back I'll get mad, reeeally mad. Mad enough to call a hit man. . .that's the ticket! Or even. . .MARVELBUSTERS!!!

So, until Wolverine gets mad at you and gets you—Make Mine Marvel (and change the X-Men back to normal, please!).

Marc "The Really Mad" Mackimon
Stitisville, Ontario
Canada

Mark, Mark, Mark. . .control yourself! You're gonna have a stroke if you keep this up!

Now, to make you happy, you should know Wolverine wants the X-Men back, too. And two other gents, one a former X-Man, the other a man in love with one of them, will begin their own search for our missing mutants very soon.

Will they find them? Maybe. . .

Dear Bob,

I'm a long time, everlasting, truly devoted X-MEN fan. Well, anyways I just wanted to let you know I love how much the X-MEN are progressing.

But I do have a few questions. Whatever happened to Professor X and the Starjammers? I really miss Professor X. Is he ever coming back? Also will Colossus ever see Kitty again, or get involved with someone else?

By the way, I really enjoyed the art by Jim Lee in #248! I would like to follow his art. What's in his future? Also, keep up the tremendous work, Chris! Make Mine X-Men!

Michael L. Chehi
PSC #1 Box 2615f5
APO SF CA 92630-0000

Professor X and the Starjammers will be appearing in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS shortly, Michael. And Charlie himself may be making an appearance in these pages in the near future.

Jim Lee will be returning for three issues, beginning with issue #256 and will then be on hand to lend Marc Silvestri a hand whenever the dreaded deadline doom looms.

MINUTEMEN
Bluntman